The Magic of the Pen

Select Miniatures from the Khamsa of Nizami Ganjavi

VOLUME II

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The Magic of the Pen Select Miniatures from the Khamsa of Nizami Ganjavi **VOLUME II**

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Back Cover: ff.91a-90b. Yaqub bey Aghqoyunlu with his courtiers H.2153., Topkapı Palace Museum Library Fatih Album / Yaqub bey Aghqoyunlu Album

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Nizami Ganjavi International Center

The Nizami Ganjavi International Center (NGIC) is an institution based in Azerbaijan, that celebrates the legacy of the great Azerbaijani poet and sage, Nizami Ganjavi, and that promotes the participation of high-level eminent figures in the study of possible solutions for the great problems of our time, with a view to promoting knowledge, tolerance, dialogue and understanding between peoples, cultures and nations.

Photo Sources

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- · Austrian National Library
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The Nizami Ganjavi International Center proudly dedicates this book to the 880th anniversary of the great Azerbaijani poet and philosopher Nizami Ganjavi.



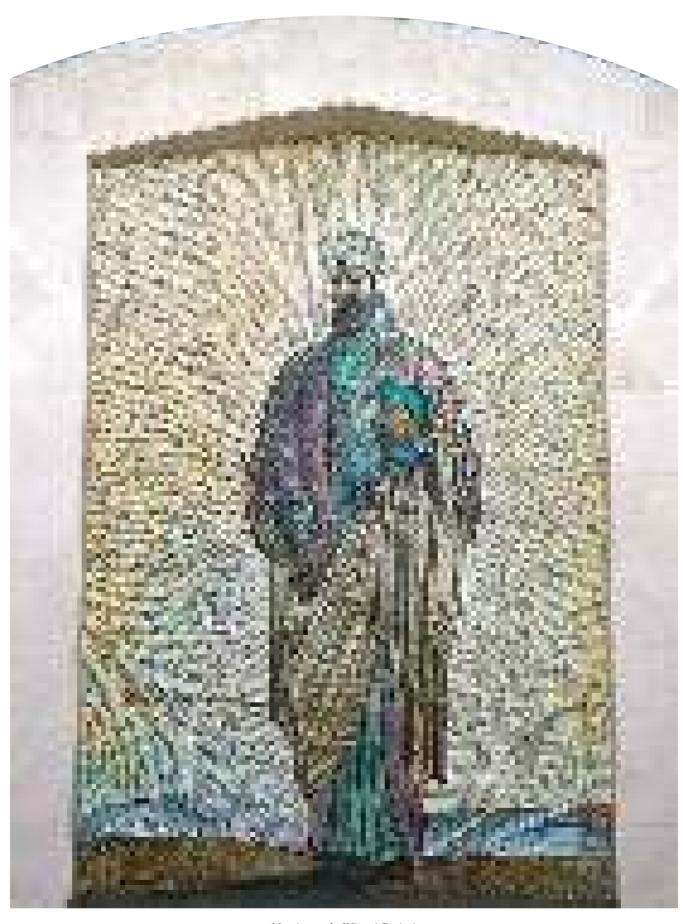
This book is bp's gift to the 880th jubilee celebrations of the great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi – one of the world's most illustrious poets, a genius of word and thought. The book is also produced in commemoration of "The Year of Nizami" announced by President Ilham Aliyev.

This is a further contribution by bp to research into and promote Azerbaijan's rich and ancient history, its enduring traditional moral values, fascinating cultural heritage and magnificent literary and poetic treasury.









Mosaic mural of Nizami Ganjavi. Baku. Nizami Metro Station. Artist: Mikayil Abdullayev.



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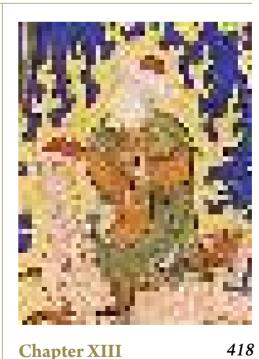
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The *Khamsa* of Nizami: The Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces

THE TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM: THE LIBRARY AND ITS ORIGINS

hen Ali Qushchi, head of Ulugh Beg's famous observatory in Samarkand, arrived in Istanbul in 1471 and was appointed chief astronomer of the Hagia Sophia Mosque, he had almost certainly brought with him some manuscripts that would have gone, not to the Palace library, but to that of the mosque. The Palace library certainly contained heirlooms from the earlier Ottoman capitals of Edirne and Bursa, including a splendidly illuminated work on music, the Magasid al-Ilkhan (R.1726), dated AH 838/1434-35 CE, but among the works in Arabic, Persian or Turkish dedicated to Mehmed II, surprisingly, only two illustrated texts are known: a work on surgery written at Amasya (Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale, Supp. Turc 693), and a Romance, the Dilsuznameh (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ousley 133), dated AH 860/1455-56 CE. This cannot have been from prejudice, for Mehmed's fame as a connoisseur of Italian painting is well documented, and it is probable that, like the classical works that must have been available in the city after its capture in 1453, his library was dispersed by his successors in diplomatic gifts or endowments to pious foundations. Most of these have yet to be traced."

"The reign of Bayezid II (1481–1512), who was also a great bibliophile, seems to have been a period of stabilization. He catalogued his father's books, and a

studio, the *nakkashane* - a group of calligraphers, illuminators, illustrators and binders - was set to work on the production of manuscripts and, later, albums, for the Palace. Nor was Istanbul isolated from events elsewhere in the Mediterranean, notably, the fall of Granada and the expulsion of Jews from Andalusia, many of whom settled in Salonica. They must also have brought many manuscripts with them, and a *Suleymannameh* (or Solomon Romance) made for Bayezid (Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, T 412) includes frontispieces showing Solomon and the Queen of Sheba and their retinues set out for all the world like Last Judgments in Romanesque Catalan Apocalypses of the type produced by Beatus of Liébana."

"It was under Bayezid II's successors that the Palace library acquired the manuscripts that make it now one of the world's richest collections. Selim I's victory over the Safavids at Chaldiran in Eastern Turkey in 1514 was followed by the sack of the palace at Tabriz, which resulted in part of the library, and some of the Court painters too, being carried off to Istanbul. Exactly how much was taken by Selim and how much by his successor Suleyman the Magnificent (1520–1566) is unclear, for the latter fought a series of victorious campaigns between 1521 and 1556, after each of which a wealth of Safavid bootty was removed to Istanbul. The scope and quality of





the Tabriz library were remarkable. It had the remains of the Ilkhanid library of the early 14th century, and the libraries of a whole series of Timurid, Qaragoyunlu and Aghqoyunlu rulers. It had been much enriched only a few years before the Battle of Chaldiran by the Safavid Shah Ismayil's sack of the library at Herat. The Ottoman booty comprised not just manuscripts, although it did include a series of magnificently illuminated Qur'ans and historic specimens of calligraphy dating from the early 14th century, and of particular note were fragments (some bound into albums) of calligraphy, illumination and illustration. Of this last group of several thousand items, some were pages from lost religious, literary or historical works; some were preparatory sketches and some designs; others were fragments, occasionally from scrolls that had very little connection with the traditional Islamic arts of the book. Among these last were plant and animal studies, both polychrome and black line, often in folio format, and series of studies of demons, black men and despondent travellers, attributed in the handwriting of Sultan Ahmed I to a mythical painter, Mehmed Siyah Qalem. The albums into which they were bound remain one of the glories of the Topkapı Saray Library."

"But Selim's acquisitions were of far wider origin. From the Baghdad remains of the Abbasid Caliphs' library (sacked in 1258) and works from the city's flourishing 14th and 15th centuries ateliers, he doubtless brought the illustrated Arabic translation of *De Materia Medica* by Pedanius Dioscorides, which was a jewel of 13th century Mesopotamian painting. From Syria (captured 1516) and the sack of Cairo (1517) he took further illustrated Arabic manuscripts, and series of Qur'ans, calligraphic manuals, scrolls and legal, historical and astronomical manuscripts that had belonged to the later Mamluk Sultans, Qaytbay (died 1496) and Qanush al-Ghawri (died 1516). From other Mamluk collections,

and possibly from Mecca and Medina, which he occupied in the same years, Selim doubtless also brought the precious early Islamic Kufic Qur'anic fragments now in the collections of the Topkapı Saray and the *Türk ve Islam Eserleri Müzesi* (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art) in Istanbul.

As has been noted, manuscripts and paintings from the campaigns of Suleyman the Magnificent continued to pour into Istanbul. Catching the imaginations of European contemporaries, however, were not the spoils of Bast but the manuscripts from the Corvina at Buda, Matthias Corvinus's great humanitarian library, which Suleyman first entered in 1526. It is customary to regard contemporary reports of his inroads there as exaggerated."

"The flood of acquisitions was also augmented by gifts. The Safavid Shah Tahmasp I (died 1576), another great patron of the illustrated book, is believed to have given the great *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings), now known as the *Houghton Shahnameh and* painted for him between about 1524 and 1535, as an accession present to Selim II, the manuscript having been sent with an embassy that arrived in Istanbul early in 1567. The pristine condition of many of its pages indicates that if Tahmasp himself had not often perused it, the Ottoman Sultan must have put it away, after which it remained forgotten by him and his successors."

"The reign of Murad III (1574–1595) marks the peak of the Palace studio's activity; the contents of the Treasury were afterwards spent increasingly on inconclusive military campaigns in the East, and after the reign of Ahmed I (1603–1617) very little more was added. Inroads into the library became, therefore, more conspicuous. Foreign connoisseurs like Sir Thomas Roe, James I of England's ambassador to the Ottoman Court, were long obsessed with the possibilities of finding classical manuscripts. In the latter part of the 17th century,

however, interest shifted towards oriental manuscripts and in the early 1670s, Antoine Galland, the first translator of *The Thousand and One Nights*, spent a year in Istanbul searching for fine manuscripts at the behest of Colbert. His most remarkable purchase (now Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale, Supp. Turc 190) is a narrative of the miraculous Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad (*Mi'rajnameh*) written and illustrated at Herat in 1436. This must have been looted from Tabriz in 1514 and as such must also have been in the Topkapı Palace Library."

"Wherever there are highly valued manuscripts and connoisseurs with the means to acquire them, there will

be strong pressure on library officials to collude with theft. It is, therefore, tempting to assume that Galland's purchases were of material that had been abstracted fraudulently from the Palace library. Galland's memoirs, however, make it clear that there was an open market in books, and there is no reason to suspect him of misconduct. It was not only Sultans who received presents of books from visiting diplomats. They themselves gave books as presents to their viziers, their dragomans, favourites and relatives - and some Ottoman officials

are known to have amassed large and valuable libraries. They also endowed their pious foundations with manuscripts commissioned for their libraries - not just Qur'ans and religious treatises, but also scientific works or even illustrated romances, particularly for *Mevlevihanes* [places in which dervishes assembled prayed and studied] of whirling dervishes, where much of the Persian written and spoken at the Ottoman Court seems to have been taught and studied."

"In conformity with Islamic law, the manuscripts would have been endowed in perpetuity upon the foundation. But foundations sometimes lapsed or were suppressed and their assets confiscated; their trustees were

also sometimes empowered to sell off property in order to commission new works. Doubtless corrupt officials with manuscripts they had pilfered also approached Galland, but there was no need for him to frequent them in order to obtain manuscripts originally in the Palace."

"A little more than a hundred years after Galland's visit, four albums of drawings, paintings, designs and calligraphy, all containing material taken from Tabriz after the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514, were presented to the Prussian ambassador, Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, who was in Istanbul from 1784 to 1791 (now Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Diez A. Pol. 70-73). This present seems to

have been official and it is fascinating to speculate whether he may have solicited it."

"The earliest Ottoman library appears to have been situated in the Treasury (Hazine; pressmark "H."), which must have made it somewhat difficult to access. Here were kept the albums of calligraphy and painting from Tabriz, and many other albums in smaller format compiled for the Ottoman Sultans. Evidently, manuscripts were treated primarily as valuables, rather than things to be read or consulted. In the early 17th century, Ahmed I had a room in

the Harem adapted as a library, but the most important library building still surviving is that built by Ahmed III in 1719 (hence the press-mark "A."), with the manuscripts arranged in classified sections, a catalogue, a staff and rules for readers. The pressmarks "R.", "B." and "E.H." in the Saray Library record the existence of other libraries in the Palace - the Revan and Baghdad $(k\ddot{o}sk)$ Koshks, built by Murad IV, which were adapted for the purpose."







The manuscripts of the *Khamsa* of Nizami in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library (Istanbul) represent the world's largest collection. There are 69 illustrated copies alone, of which 41 are the subject of our study. They are dated back to the early 15th through to the late 16th century, and cover both the history and art of dynasties including the Timurids, Qaraqoyunlu, Safavids and Ottomans. The miniatures in the Topkapı *Khamsas* alone facilitate a tracking of artistic evolution in the Middle East over a long period. Needless to say, we do not include in our review all *Khamsa* manuscripts from the Topkapı collection; our book presents just a brief overview of important books and examples of miniature art included in illustrated manuscripts.

There was an abundant source of lively topics and plots for ornaments and paintings. From the *Khamsa*, scenes from *Khosrow and Shirin*, *The Seven Beauties* and *Iskandarnameh* were most popular with the artists: their range and variation of theme and plot providing ample subject matter. In Khosrow and Shirin, as well as the love story, there are many other events and episodes usable as a basis for a painting. *The Seven Beauties* is chock-full of colourful tales and legends, and the paintings produced are an important artistic addition to the expression of the storyline. The same is true of *Iskandarnameh*, even more replete with events and extraordinary scenes. Even so, scenes in the other two poems of the quintet, *The Treasury of Mysteries* and *Leyli and Ma*-

jnun, are not lacking in inspiration for the creation of works of art.

Images of the seven beauties appear at the very beginning of that poem, in the shape of princesses of the Seven Climes, whose portraits Bahram Gur discovers on the walls of a secret room in his palace. The tale related by the Princess of the Red Dome tells of a portrait created by the king's daughter herself.

In *Iskandarnameh*, the *Khamsa*'s final poem, Iskandar is recognized by Nushaba, Queen of Barda, from his portrait, one of many portrayals of various rulers in Nushaba's collection. In a succeeding episode, Iskandar and the Chinese Khagan observe a competition between two artists, a Rûmi (in the Islamic world, the Roman Empire - Byzantium - was known primarily as Rûm) and a Chinese. And finally, the dead dog painted by the legendary artist Mani on an image painted in nature of a spring and pool represented a composition so realistic it could deceive people. Apart from *The Treasury of Mysteries* and *Leyli and Majnun*, such episodes are plentiful in the texts of the *Khamsa*.

Several of the Middle East's cultural centres experienced new developments in the arts of those times: first under the 14th century Ilkhanate and Jalayirids, then during the 15th century rule of Amir Timur and the princes of his dynasty, followed by the Qaraqoyunlu and Aghqoyunlu rulers of the region.

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Miniature art reached its peak in 16th century Tabriz during the reign of Shah Ismayil Safavi; from there it spread to other cities, including Baghdad, Shiraz, Yazd, Herat, Samarkand and, later on, to Isfahan; they took up the metropolitan style and created their own versions of it. Other cities of the Safavid Empire also benefitted from this upsurge, to a lesser extent than Tabriz, but still amassing scientific, literary and artistic currents.

This was the summit of achievement for the arts of the book: calligraphy, book binding and paper making.

The miniature as fine art and book illustration represented the limit of human skill to true perfection, never to be surpassed.

Despite the size of the Topkapı collection, the many illustrations concentrate on only a few of the plots. Although there is a somewhat restricted selection of episodes from the *Khamsa*, the Topkapı miniatures are clear evidence of a richness of expression and interpretation of the same stories.

These paintings, while maintaining the basic stylistic features of the workshop, also bear the imprint of the painter, expressing individual interpretations of the subject. Thus, all these works follow the main principle: the indefeasible laws of tradition, then the rules of a local school or workshop and, finally, the artist's personal style. Only the combination of all three fundamental principles or qualifications could result in such distinctive work.

For centuries, *kitabkhanas* (manuscript production centres) worked strictly within the artistic traditions of the past and the techniques of material creation (making

the paper, paints etc.); on the other hand, they also led the way in intensive research, thus stimulating evolution.

From its origins, a *kitabkhana* led by a head artist was a kind of 'Academy' with its own traditions, method and style.







As we noted above, miniatures in the Topkapı *Khamsa* manuscripts are attributed to different schools of the 15th and 16th centuries, but all are in keeping with the dominant styles of that time span.

The oldest *Khamsa* in the Istanbul collection is dated to the 1450s. Although the original *Khamsa* appeared late in the 12th century and was immediately hugely popular, illustrated copies appeared much later. This does not mean that they had not been created earlier, just the opposite; it would be logical to assume that such copies did exist, but were lost in time, to events, people, or otherwise.

How could it be that a literary work so closely related to the art of painting would remain unillustrated when a richly illustrated manuscript of *Varqa wa Gulshah* by Ayyuqi was created early in the 13th century? The immediate success and dissemination of the *Khamsa* from the moment it was given life would surely have led to its illustration.

The oldest illustrated copies of the Nizami *Khamsa* are 6 manuscripts representing the early Yazd school. While belonging to the Shiraz school and dating from the latter period of Sultan Ibrahim's reign, they still display a certain independence in their depiction of the world around them. Shiraz-style elements infiltrated Yazd, but in a somewhat roughened and bulky manner. Here we can see the familiar Chinese clouds, but they are heavier and, compulsorily for the miniature, overhang the horizon like an arch. We can see the same rocks, like foam-topped waves; the horses are

similar in size, but bulkier, with disproportionately long necks and smaller, somewhat deformed heads; they are also seen from an unfamiliar perspective.

These works of the Yazd school are a Shiraz style disguised by a process of archaization. This would develop in Shiraz and in other schools, eventually resulting in short, stocky figures, the so-called "Turkman Commercial Style".

Examples of Yazd-style paintings in the *Khamsa* manuscript: H.779; R.862; H.870; R.855; R.866; H.753.

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Manuscript H.779 was created by two calligraphers: the first of them, Imad Khabbaz Barkuhi, completed his contribution in AH 843/January–February 1440 CE; the second, Abd al-Rahman Khwarazmi, copied the first 174 pages in AH 857/1453 CE.

Some of the miniatures are attributed to the Yazd school. Others are created in the Turkman Commercial style and display a greater daring and dynamic. On the other hand, the Yazd pieces in manuscript H.779 are distinguished by their brilliance in comparison with the mediocre Turkman miniatures of Shiraz.

The bold triangular composition of *Khosrow be-fore Shirin's Castle*, for example, is fully dynamic; striving upward, the whole structure imposes momentum on rocks festooned lace-like, the rider leaning forward, the tree clinging to the wall and, finally, the palace itself. Every single element appears to be reaching for the princess at the top of the building. This is one of the best of the Yazd school's works.



f. 77. Shirin visits Farhad at Mount Bisitun.

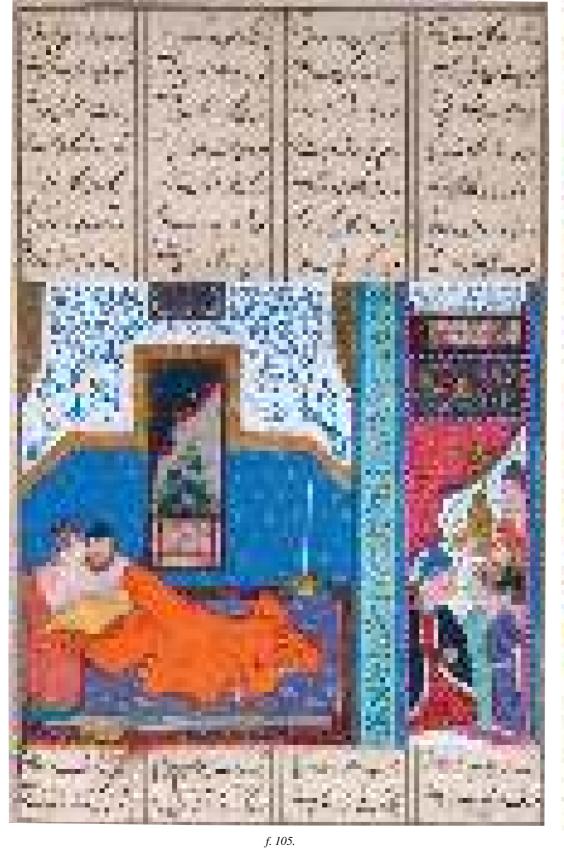




f. 89.

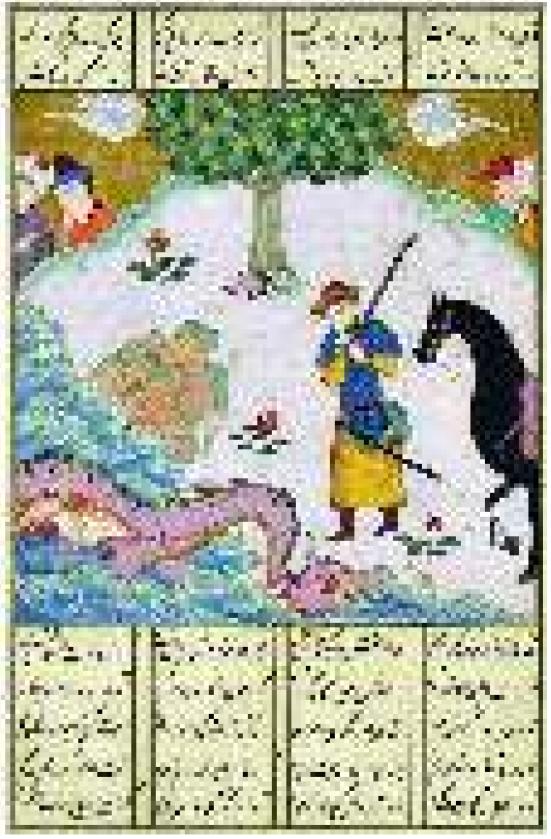
Khosrow before Shirin's castle.



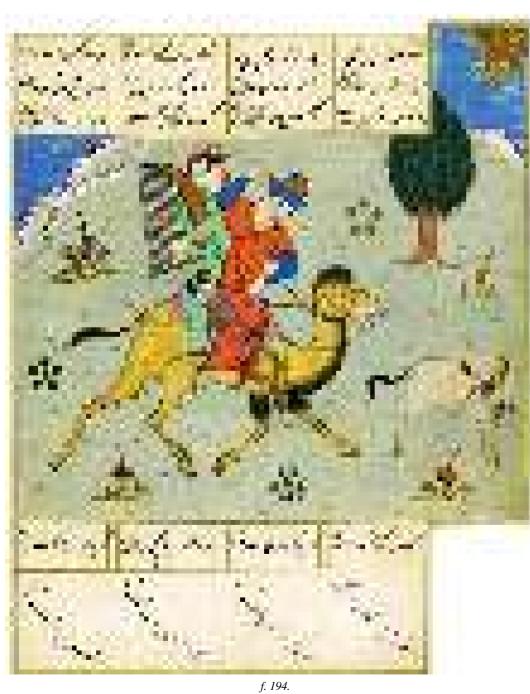


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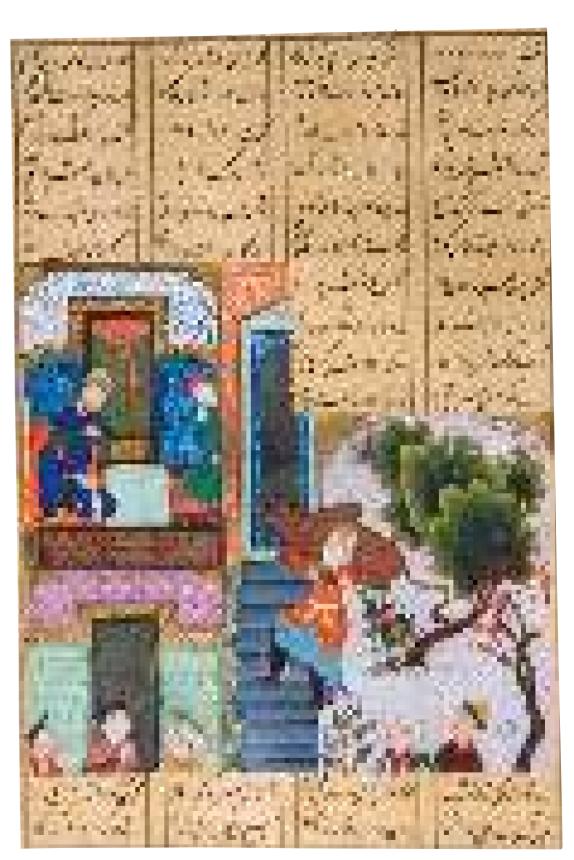
Khosrow and Shirin in their bridal chamber.



f. 187. Bahram Gur slays the dragon.

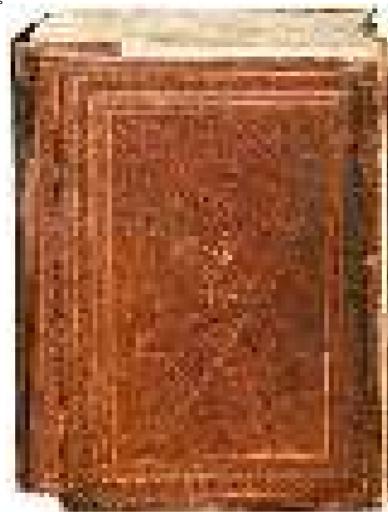


Bahram Gur hunts with Fitnah.



f. 196. Fitnah lifts the calf on her shoulders.

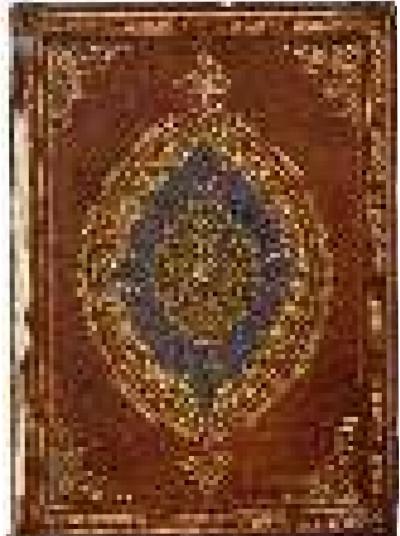
The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces



Front cover, outer.

Manuscript R.862 was created in AH 846/
July–August 1442 CE but contains no information
about its customer, calligrapher, or place of origin.
The manuscript is endowed with a colophon and
41 miniatures.

It is likely that some miniatures in Manuscript R.862 were created under a new owner who seems not to have liked Yazd's more rigid compositions. It was a time of mixing, a syncretism of styles, and a time when the Ottoman school of miniature was in formation. Stchoukine writes: "This Khamsa manuscript is valuable not only for its miniatures, but also because it belongs to the library of Fatih Sultan Mehmet II, renowned for his victories culminating in a triumphant capture of Constantinople, as well as for his skilful management of the lands he had conquered". He was also credited for his cultural activity an oriental-style humanitarian, he was a great connoisseur of Persian literature and the arts, the miniature in particular; he liked Oriental, Byzantine and Italian styles. This prompted him to order his portrait from Gentile Bellini - a Venetian master.

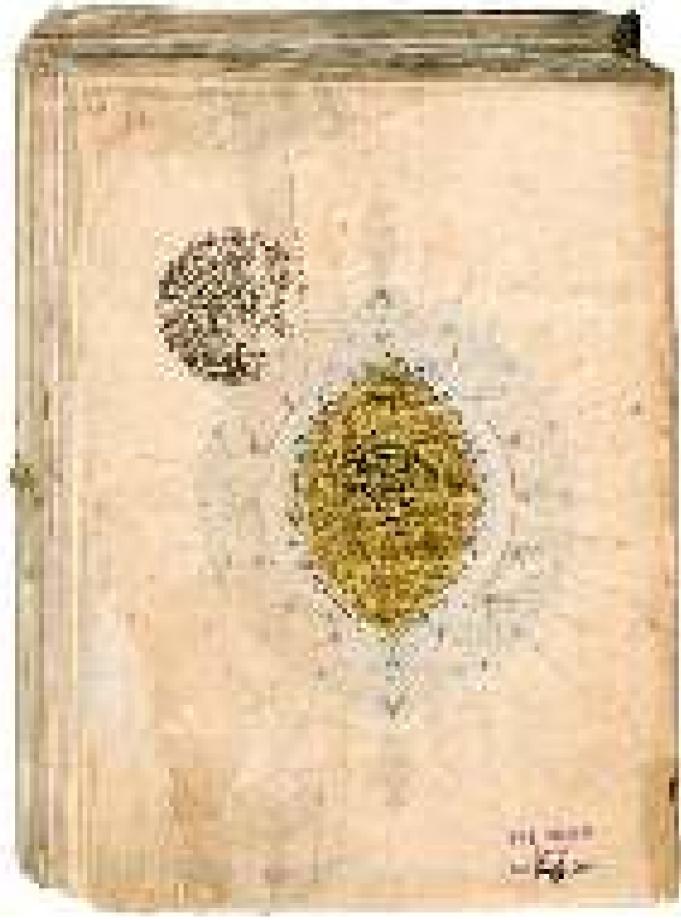


Front cover, inner.









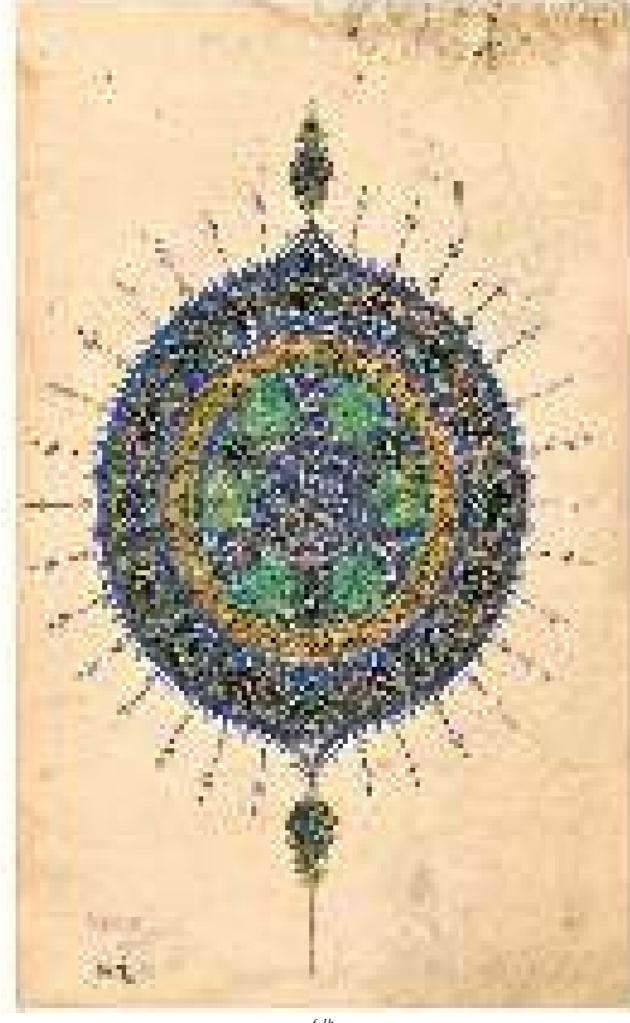
Page with seal.



The Conqueror ordered a search for albums (*muraqqa*) of works by both contemporary and earlier painters; such compilations were extremely fashionable among Muslim rulers. Moreover, this warrior and patron of the arts never missed out on any illustrated manuscript created in the art centres of the Middle East (Tabriz, Shiraz, Yazd, Herat, Baghdad etc.). His library undoubtedly contained miniatures of the greatest masters; Mehmet often acquired them as spoils of war or by diplomatic exchange.

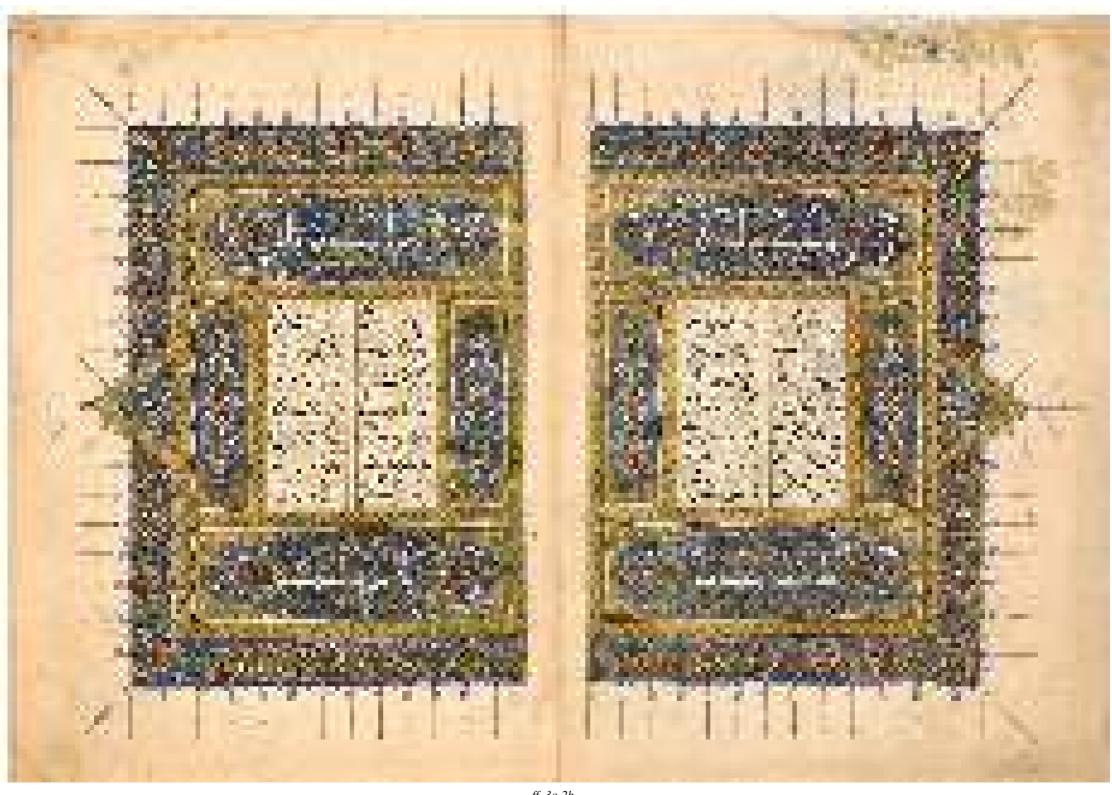
Many manuscripts that have come down to us do not contain any information about their owners or creators. Without colophon data, we cannot confirm their belonging to Mehmet's library. Even more interesting and valuable therefore is the work that has on its first page the decorated bookplate of its owner, Sultan Mehmet ibn Murad Khan, also known as Mehmet Fatih, the Conqueror of Constantinople.

The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces



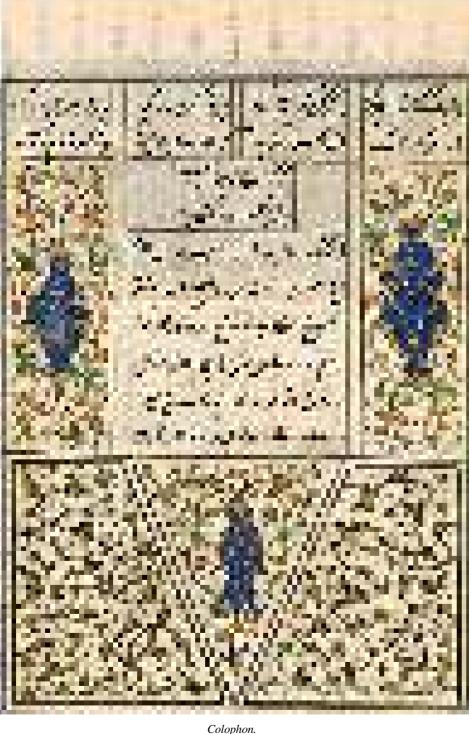
f. 1b. Shamsa - rosette.





ff. 3a-2b.
Illuminated double-page frontispiece.









f. 68. Khosrow and Shirin playing chovgan.

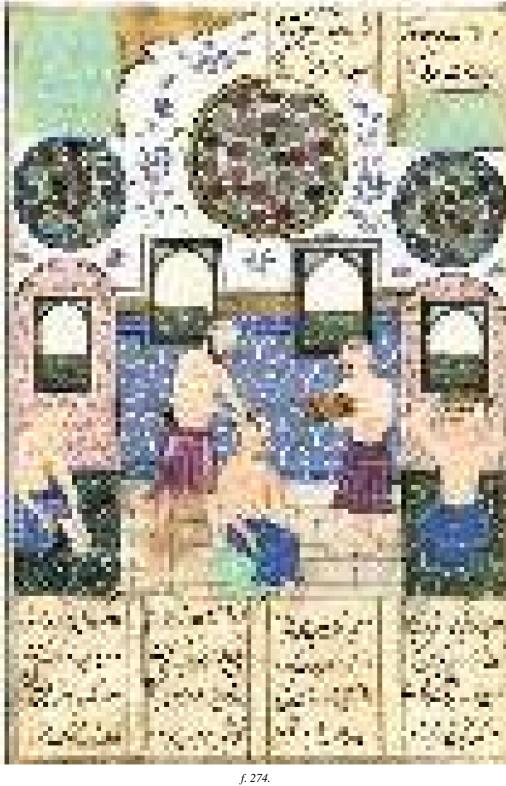


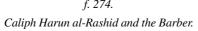
f. 170. Leyli slaps ibn Salam on the face.



Sitting on the carpet in his seven-dome palace Khawarnaq, Bahram receives a goblet from a girl.

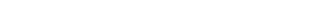








f. 275. Mahan rides a dragon.





Iskandar and his cavalry fight the Zangi infantry.

Riding a horse, Iskandar watches a fight between two quails.

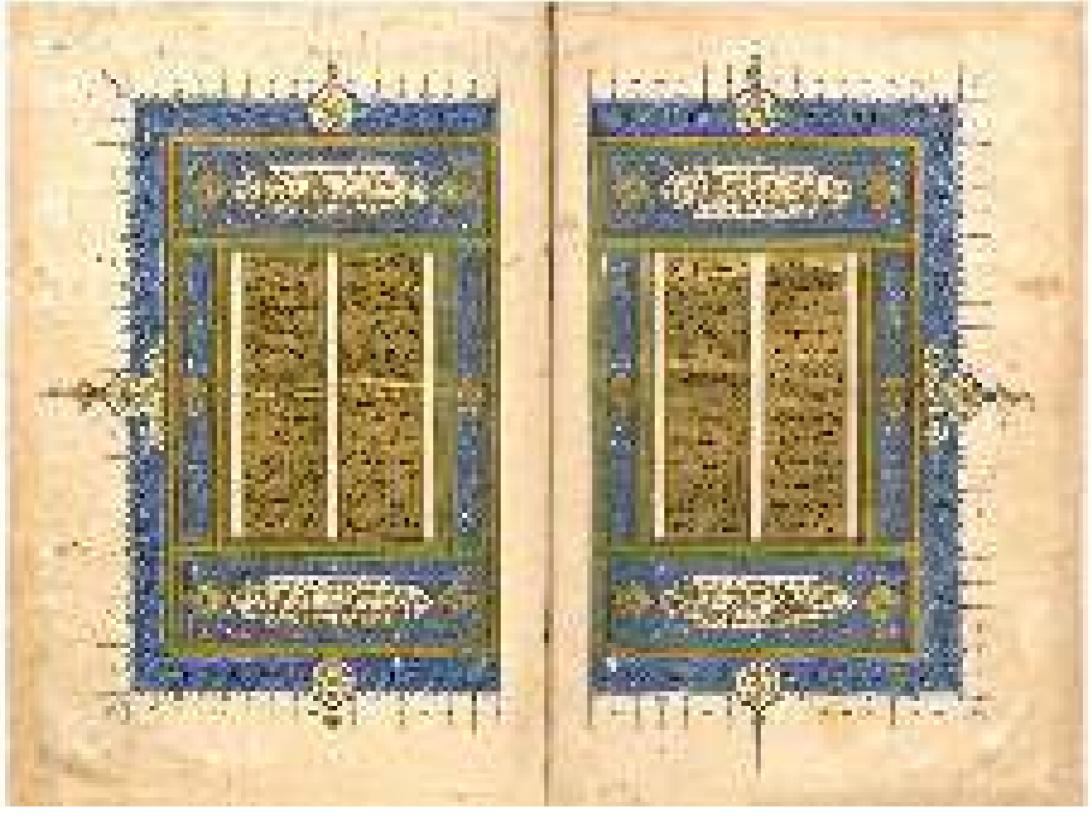
f. 341. Iskandar and the dying Darius.



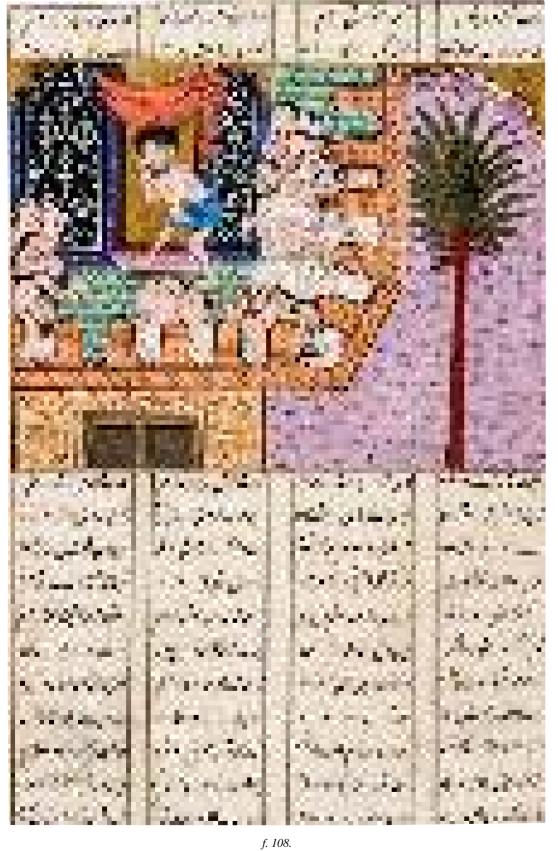
f. 360.

Iskandar and his two companions speak with three passers-by.

The Khamsa Manuscript H.870 was created by the calligrapher Abu Bakr ibn Ismayil ibn Mahmoud ibn Ali al-Faruqi in AH 848/18 June–18 July 1444 CE. It contains 34 miniatures, of which the most interesting belong to the Yazd school. Miniatures of the later period represent the delayed transformation of Yazd style into the Turkman Commercial Style.



ff. 2a-1b. Exquisite double-pages (sarloukh).



Majnun in front of the Ka'ba.

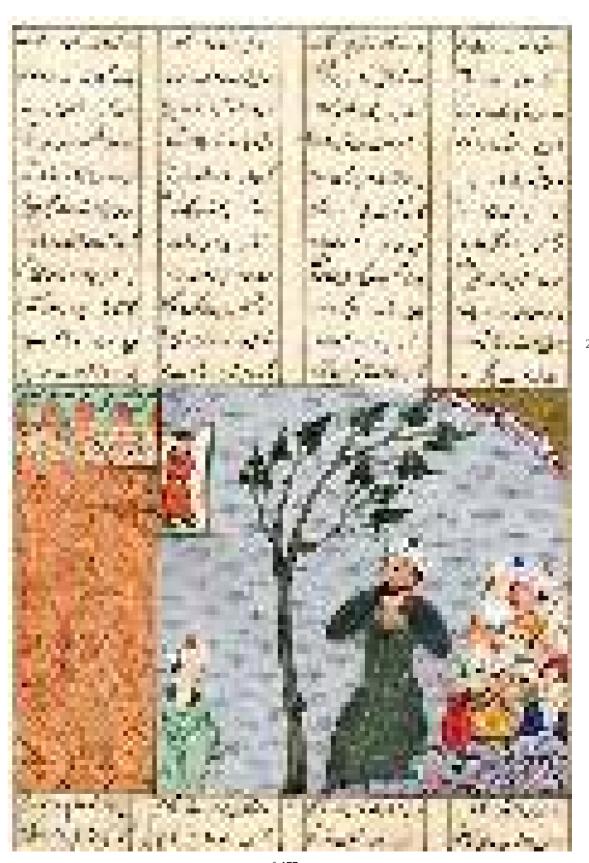


f. 115. Majnun rescues a gazelle from a hunter.





Suleyman and Bilkis with their paralyzed child.



f. 177.

One of her suitors looks at the princess's portrait hanging on the wall.

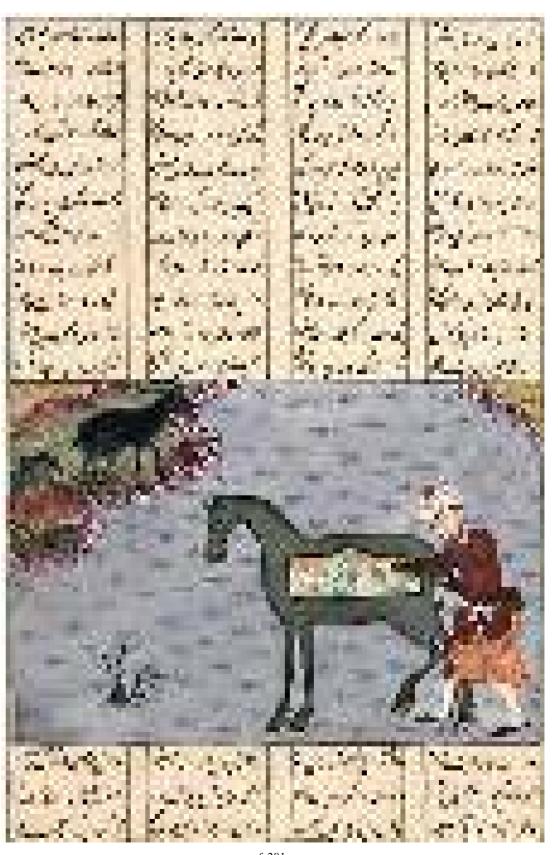
Tale of the Red Dome.

(Rare illustration)

f. 242.

Bulinas exits before Iskandar from the cave in which Kay Khosrow had disappeared.

(Rare illustration)



f. 281.

A bronze horse and dead body with a magic ring.
(Rare illustration)





f. 293. Iskandar in the garden of Iram.

Iskandar watches a ship from his palace.

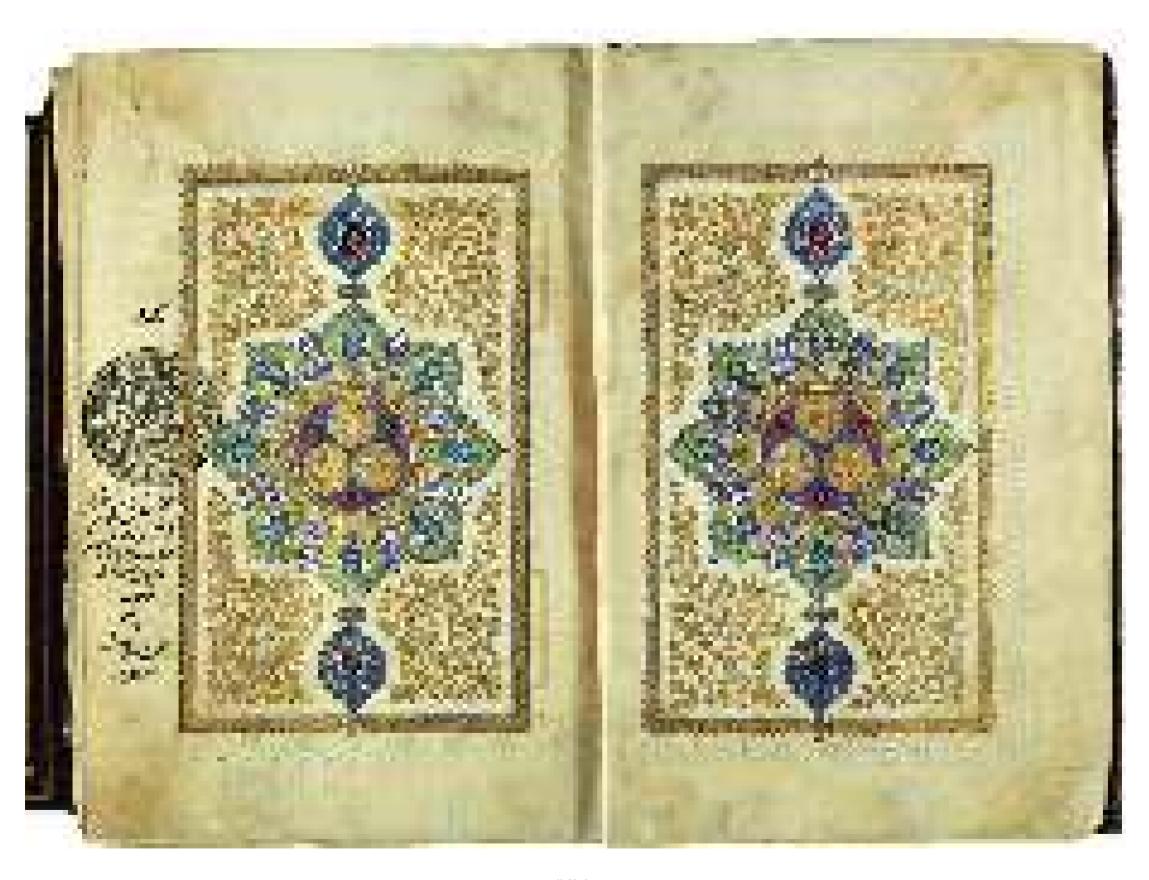
The final part of the *Khamsa* Manuscript R.855 provides the date AH 850/May–June 1446 CE. It contains 8 miniatures, typical of Yazd, which stylistically indicate a single artist.



ff. 1b-2a.
Diptych.
Two riders chase and slay a panther.
The young prince rides a horse on the hunting ground.

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ff. 2b-3a.

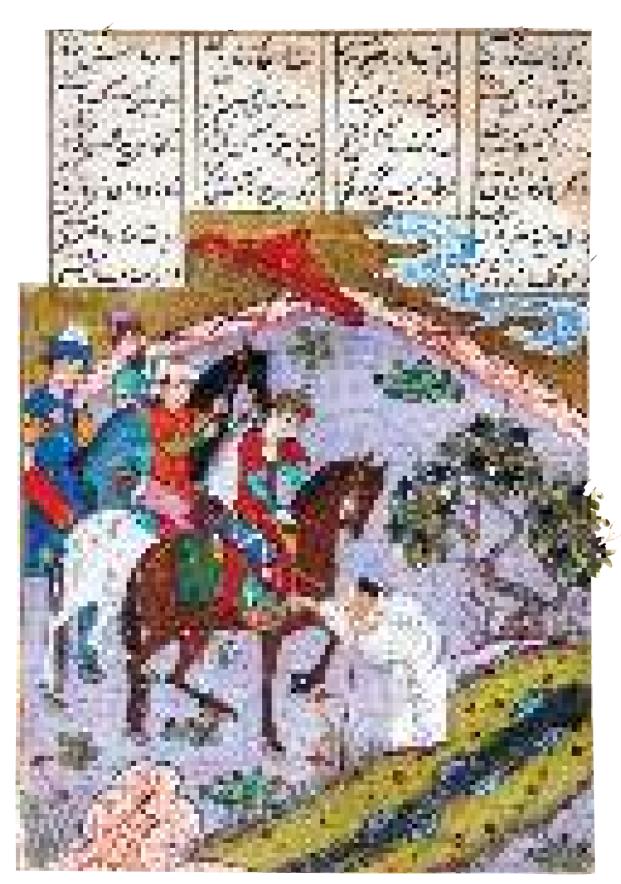
Illuminated double-pages with rosette - medallion.

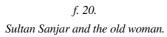
01-163 NIZAMI chapter-8-a ing.indd 31

ff. 3b-4a.
Illuminated double-page frontispiece.









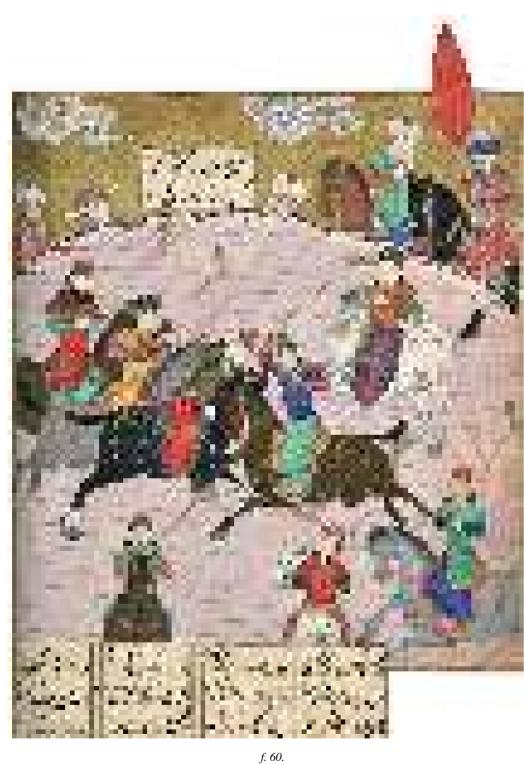


f. 52.

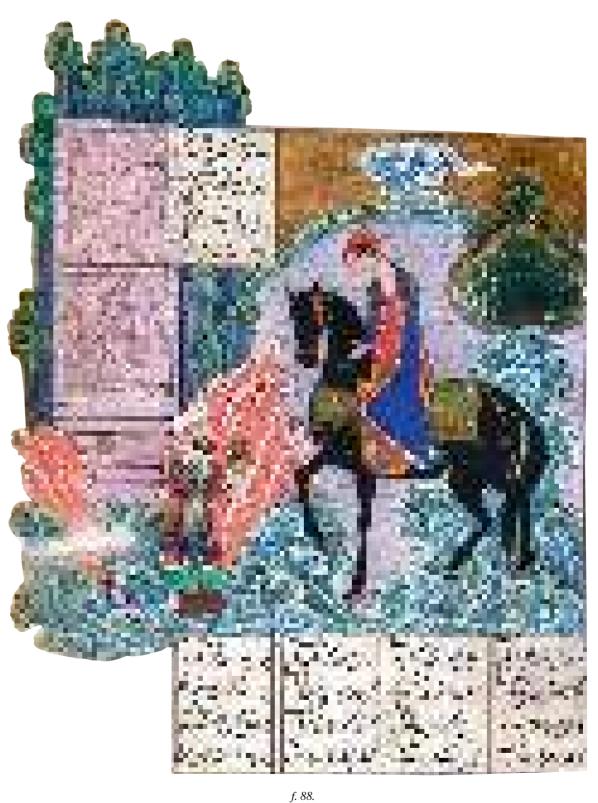
Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing in a spring.

01-163 NIZAMI chapter-8-a ing.indd 33





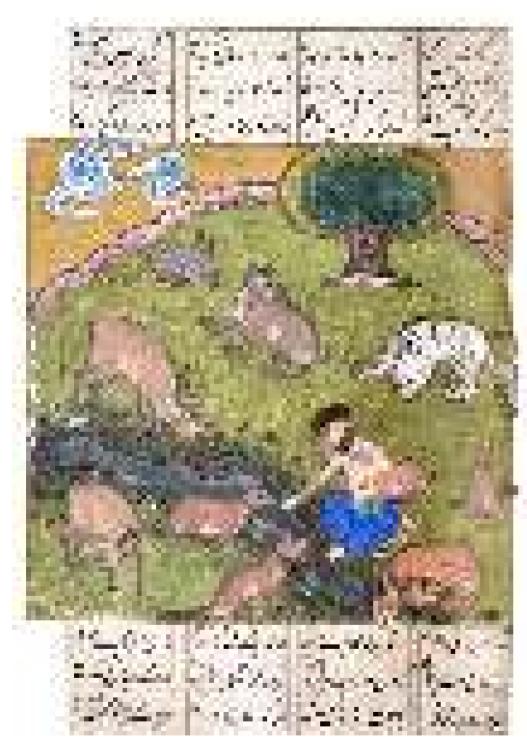
Khosrow and Shirin playing chovgan.



Shirin visiting Farhad on Mount Bisitun.

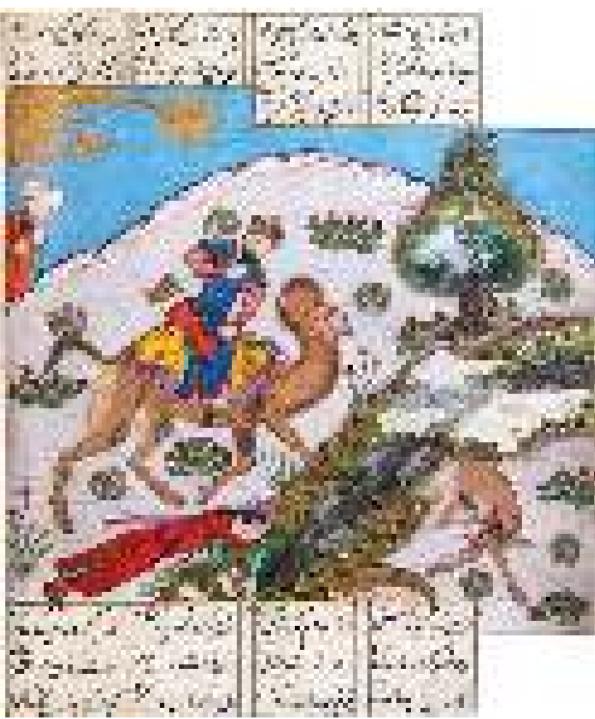
Farhad is on his knees before Shirin and offers her a jug of milk. They are surrounded by a landscape of wild beauty: light jade, "rosy yellow", and bluish-grey rocks rise wavelike up to the golden sky. A lilac plain serves as a backdrop. Shirin in her azure dress serves as a bright, decorative element and dominates the composition.





f. 163.

Majnun in the desert among wild animals.

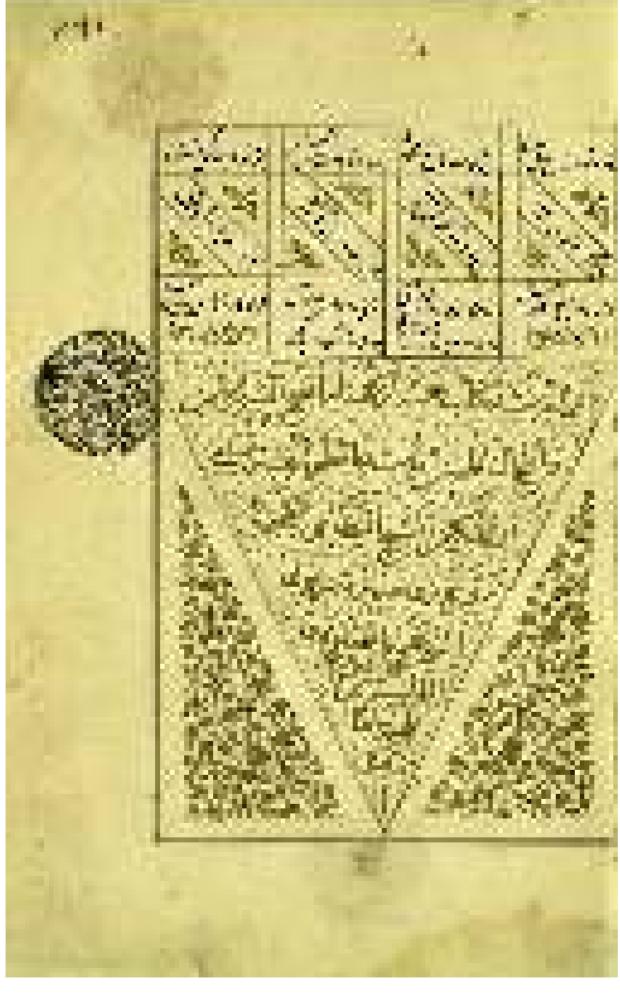


f. 208.

Bahram Gur pushes Fitnah off her camel.

This miniature is an interesting example of an artist being poorly acquainted with the text. Bahram looks down from the height of his camel at Fitnah lying near a stream with a harp (chang) in her hands. On the opposite side, there is a gazelle with an arrow piercing both its hoof and ear. A man watches the drama from afar. The characters form a triangular composition. It is notable that the miniature illustrates an episode from the Shahnameh that features a shah's mistress, one Azada. Nizami interpreted this episode in a totally different way: as we know, the wise vizier did not execute Fitnah at the Shah's command but hid her instead in his palace. The error in the miniature stems from the artist's ignorance of the Khamsa's text.

The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces





Front cover, outer.



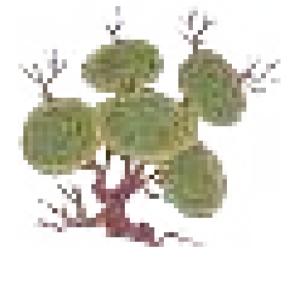
Colophon. Front cover, inner.





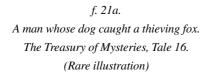


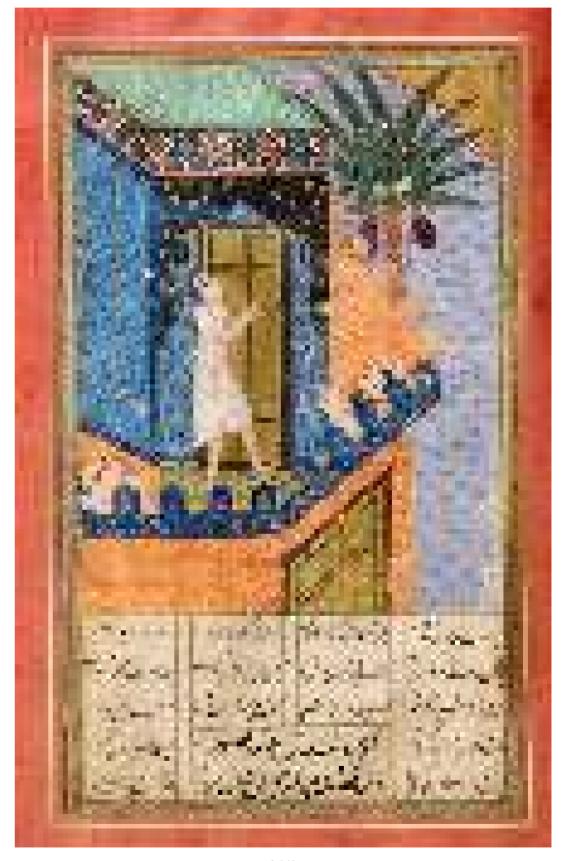
f. 2b.
Right page of an illuminated frontispiece.



The *Khamsa* Manuscript R.866 was created by the calligrapher Ali ibn Nizam al-Damgani in Yazd. The miniatures for this manuscript (dated 850 AH/1446–47 CE) are of particular importance for the study of 15th century pictorial art. This is for the fact that as well as the date of its completion it also indicates its place of origin, i.e., Yazd. This information enables us to determine where many other stylistically similar manuscripts were created, and to attribute them all to one centre of arts. Thus, we may reacht a conclusion about an unremarked but original miniature school that stood out from the rest.

In those days, Yazd was ruled by Sultan Muhammad ibn Baysunghur-Mirza. This son of the famous bibliophile took possession of the city and adjacent provinces from his grandfather Shahrukh in 1445.





f. 141. Majnun before the Ka'ba.







Front cover, outer.

Front cover, inner.

The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.753 is distinguished by its rich design and 37 miniatures. No date, time of creation or names of calligrapher or artist are provided. It is incomplete: many blank sheets are left for decoration and illustrations. Two sheets with richly decorated margins are left without text. The only way to identify the miniatures is by stylistic analysis to assess their artistic value and place in the evolution of their times.

The 20 miniatures are not quite homogeneous; they differ from one another in both artistic value and graphic quality. Stylistic groups differ by place of origin, as well as by time of creation. The guiding principle in this particular case will be chronology rather than origin. They belong to the mid-16th century Yazd school, as can be surmised from the clouds, angels and *houris*, the arrangement of figures etc.

The oldest are from the mid-15th century Yazd school: they are archaic, with primitive texture and crude coloration. Nevertheless, they interpret dramatic scenes from the text in expressive manner, for example: *Sharr tears out his travelling companion Kheir's eyes*; *Queen of Fairies*; *Mahan*; *Girls bathing*.

Miniatures of the mid-16th century Yazd school are identified from the drawing of clouds, angels and *peris*, their layout and other features.

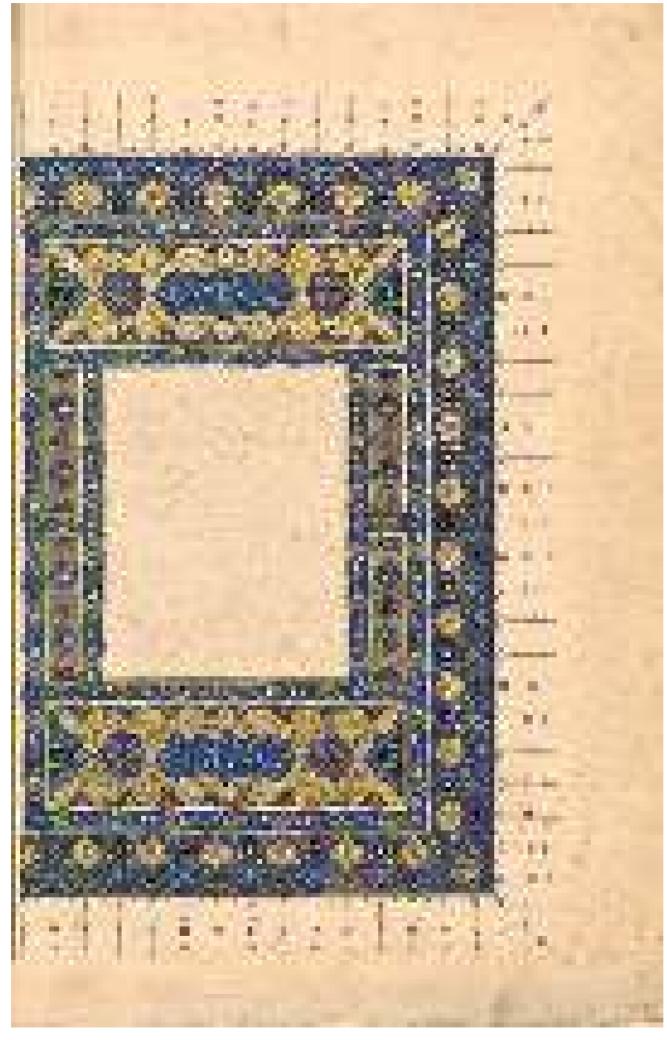


f. 2a.

Left page of the illuminated frontispiece.







f. 3b.
Right page of an exquisite frontispiece.

The second group comprises *The competition between Chinese and Rum artists* and *Mani draws a dead dog*. They are exquisite in their quality, elegance of drawing and refined coloration. In the first miniature, Iskandar and his courtiers are depicted in somewhat rigid and static pose, while the characters of both wall paintings, the young man reading poems to the princess and the princess herself, are in elegant poses, with elongated silhouettes, and surrounded by a charming landscape. This miniature is quite close to the Herat school which, by the end of Shahrukh's time, was the flagship establishment of the Middle East.

The miniatures Nushirvan and his Vizier at the ruins of the fortress listening to owls (the characters wear Taj-e Haydari turbans), The storekeeper entrusts the fox with guarding his store; Caliph Harun al-Rashid and the barber and Khosrow sees Shirin bathing in a spring can be attributed to the third group.

The third group is also distinguished by features inherent to the Shah Ismayil-period Shiraz School. One is dated AH 919/1513–14 CE; the Turkman style of the second half of the 15th century had already disappeared and new types had emerged. Elongated people and animals have replaced the short, large-headed figures and horses that resembled merry-go-round rides. *Khosrow sees*

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Shirin bathing in a spring is one of the best miniatures, epitomising Safavid style.

In this miniature, Khosrow is dressed in purple and gold, his turban is white with a dark blue baton; Shirin wears light, loose trousers in dark blue. There is a golden sky, blue clouds and a greyish-green plain. The mountains are purple and blue; trees are in white blossom with red details. This exquisite miniature was created in Shiraz, in 16th century Tabriz style during the reign of Shah Ismayil I.

The fourth group of miniatures is dated 1530–1550 and distinguished by Ottoman-style features (Suleyman the Magnificent reigned in this period): headwear, the princess's crown, the depiction of greenery and an attempt to convey perspective etc.

Without reliable information, it would be quite difficult to explain the presence of four different groups in a single manuscript.

Based on the features of miniatures in the first group, we attribute them to the Yazd school during the rule of Sultan Muhammad ibn Baysunghur Mirza, i.e., to 1445–1450 AD.



f. 6.
Ascension (Mi'raj) of the Prophet Muhammad.







J. 196.

A shopkeeper entrusts a fox with guarding his store.

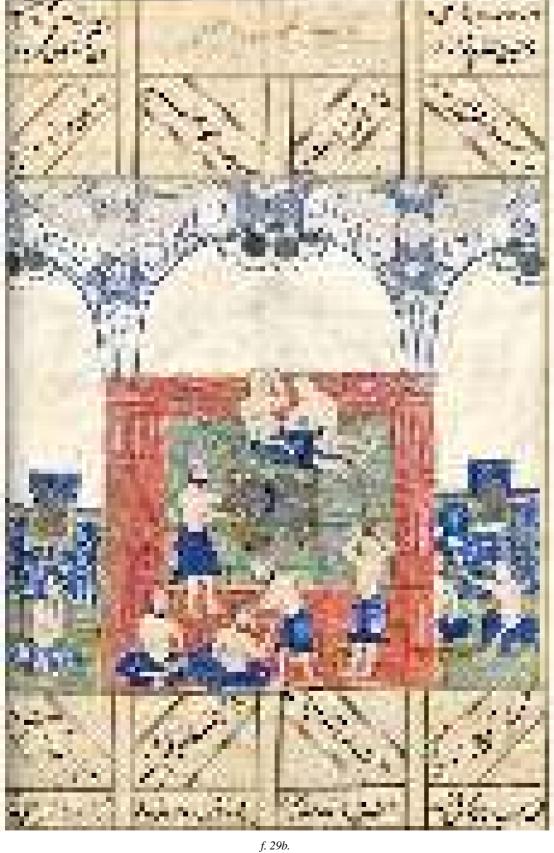
(Rare illustration)

It is suggested that two miniatures in the second group were created at the same time and place by an artist who was a native of Herat.

Just like his father, Sultan Muhammad was a connoisseur of books, and his library employed artists from different localities, among them were some invited from Herat during the reign of his grandfather Shakhrukh.

The third group represents early 16th century Shiraz. The manuscript was delivered to Turkey when the two empires established good diplomatic relations; the seal on f.1 tells us that it was admitted to Suleyman the Magnificent's library as *waqf* property. Illustration work continued here; work on the manuscript was suspended and resumed several times, which explains the differences in style and timing.

It can therefore be concluded that Yazd had its own school of miniature painting that, although less famous than its more renowned counterparts, possessed some unique and distinctive features.

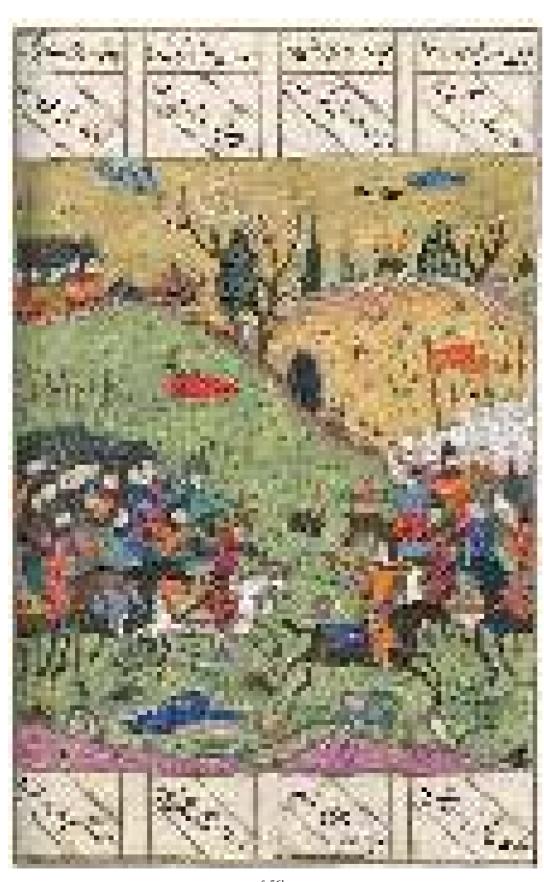


Caliph Harun al-Rashid and the barber.



Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing in a spring.





f. 56b.

The battle between Khosrow and Bahram Chubineh.



f. 123b.

Leyli rides a camel and meets three people.







f. 163. Architect Simnar is thrown from the roof of the Khawarnaq palace.





f. 164.

Elders pleading before Hurmuzd on behalf of the young Khosrow.

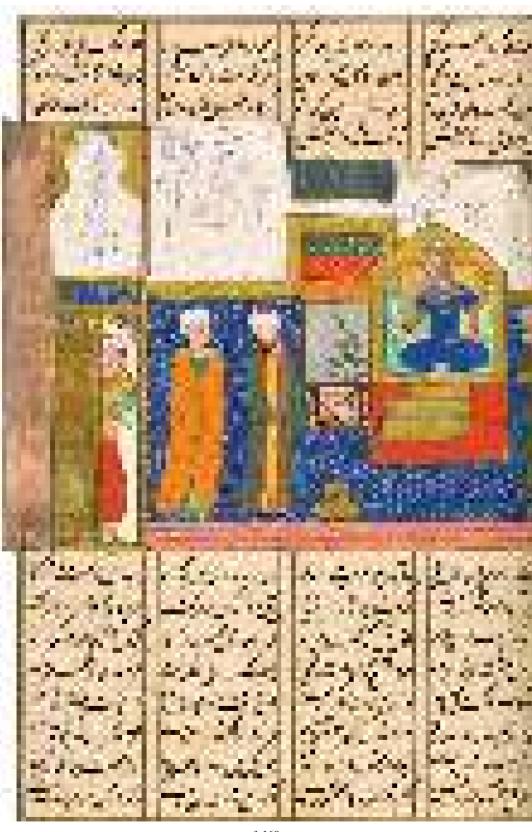
The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces



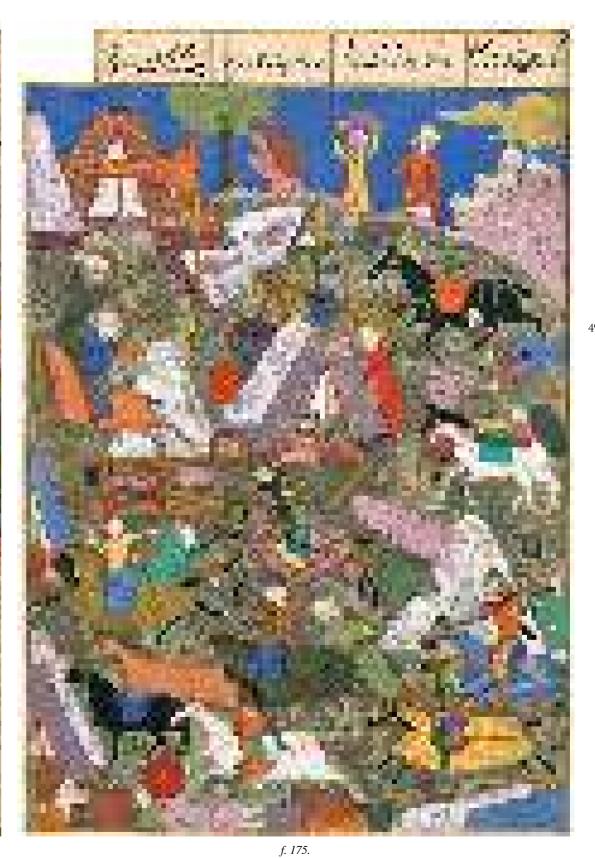
f. 167.
Bahram Gur in the secret room with a series of seven portraits.

f. 166b. Bahram Gur slays the dragon.

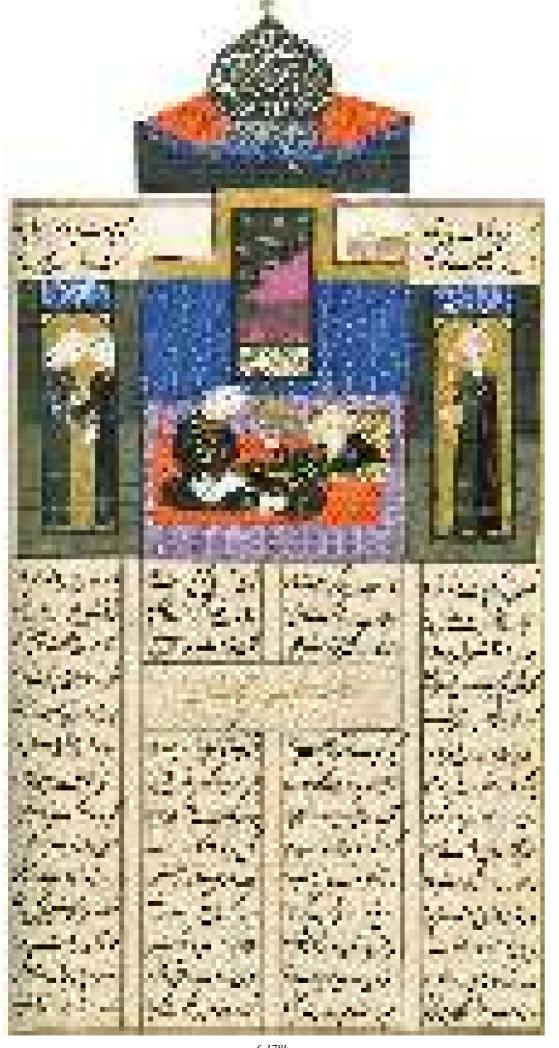




f. 168. Bahram Gur before his father Shah Yazdigard.

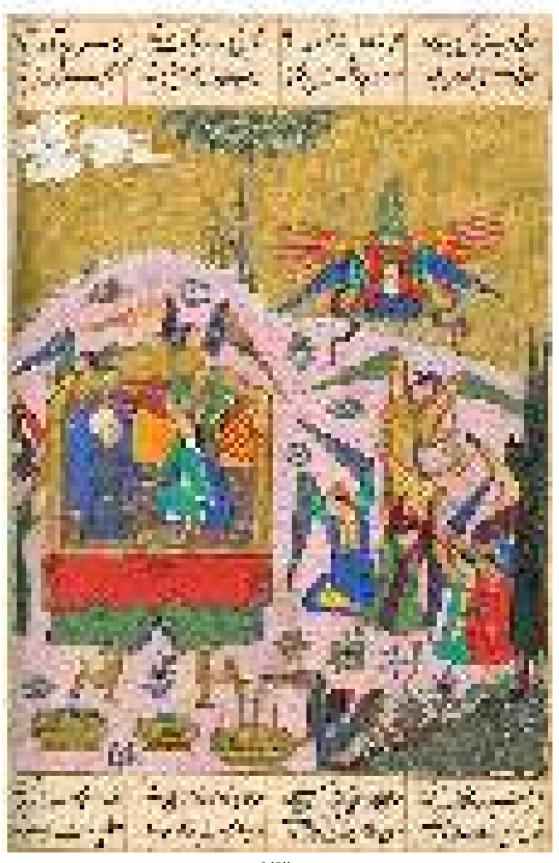


One of the battles between Bahram Gur and the Chinese Khagan.



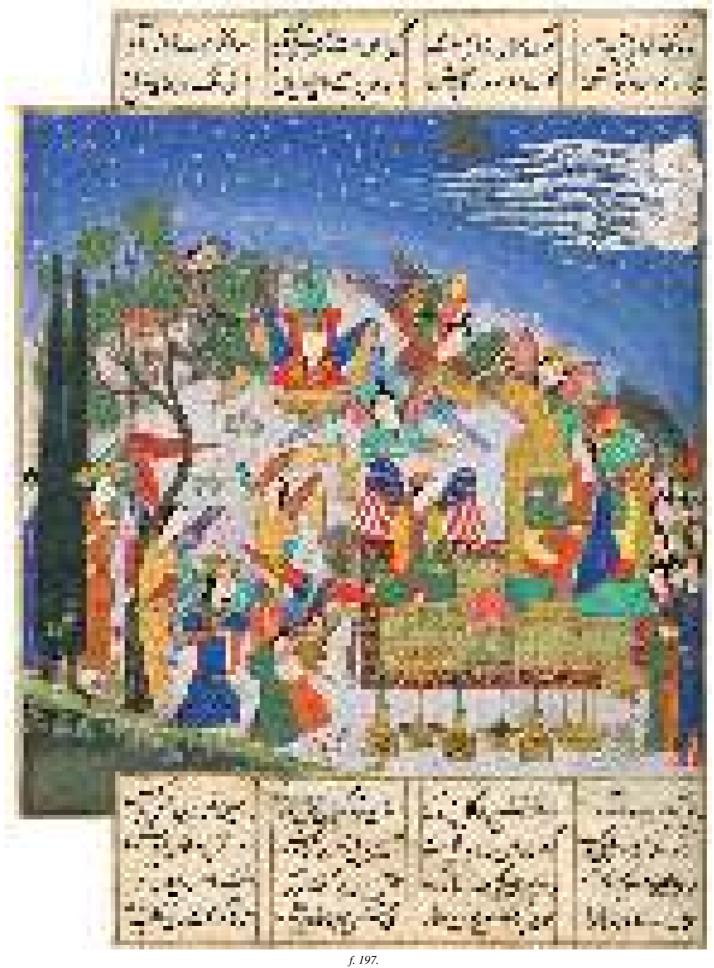
f. 178b.

Bahram Gur with the princess from the Black Dome.



f. 181b. A traveller and the Fairy Queen.





Hiding in the tree, Mahan watches the Fairy Queen and her escort.



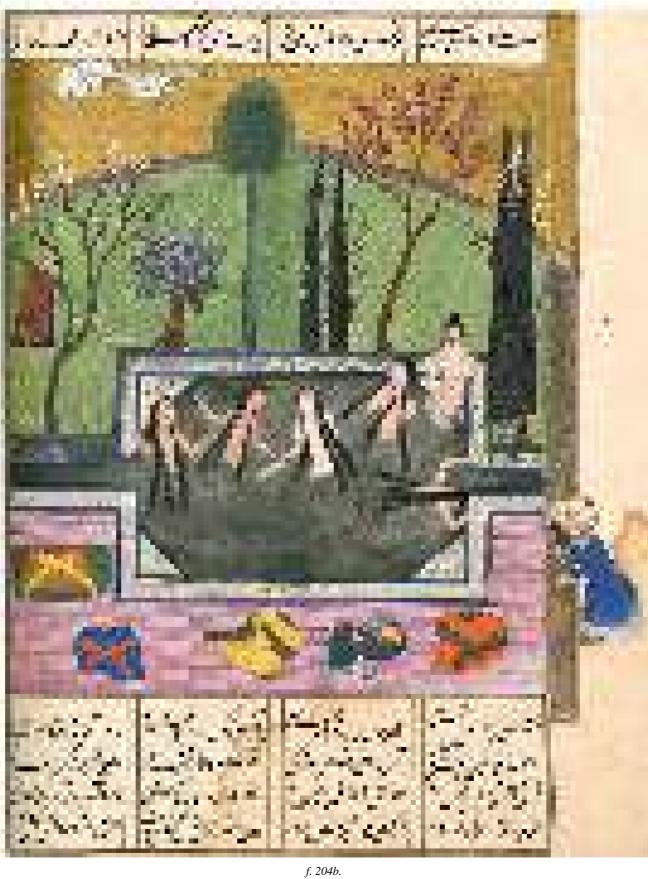
f. 198. Khizr leading Mahan by the hand. (Rare illustration)



Sharr tears out his fellow traveller Kheir's eyes.

Tale related by the princess of the Sixth Clime. Quite rough, but expressive; the only existing illustration of this plot.





The master of the garden watches girls bathing.



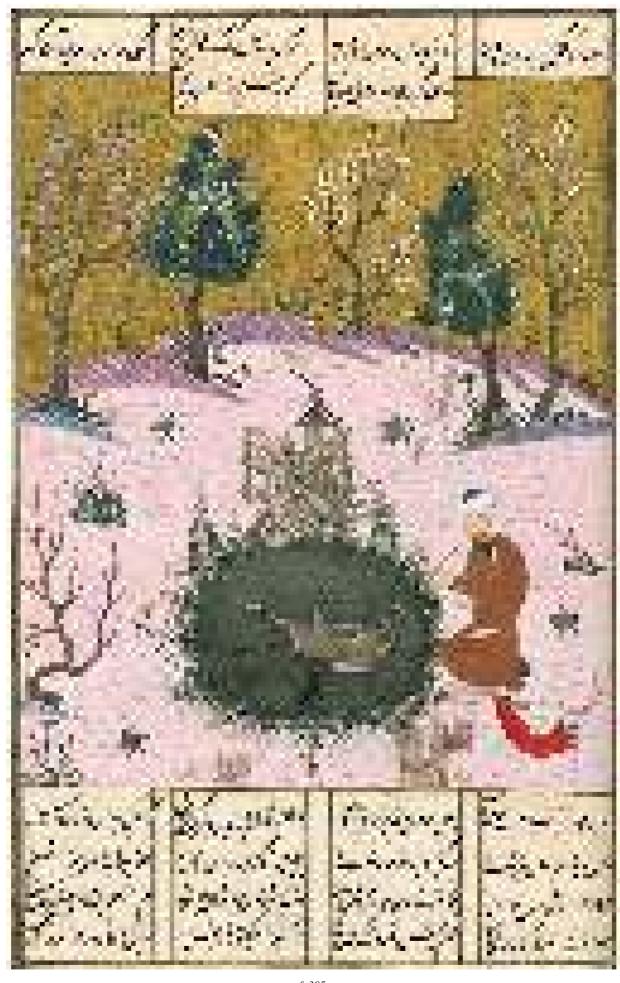
f. 304.

The competition between Chinese and Rum artists.

Iskandar, dressed in turquoise, and three people by his side in lilac, orange and green garments examine the pictures on the walls. Both pictures, absolutely identical, show two teenagers and a woman in a garden. The Chinese artist has polished the wall to create a perfect reflection of the picture drawn by his Rum (Byzantine) counterpart. The action takes place in a purple-coloured palace with the lower ceramic part in azure and green. The floor is jade-green and light purple.







f. 305.

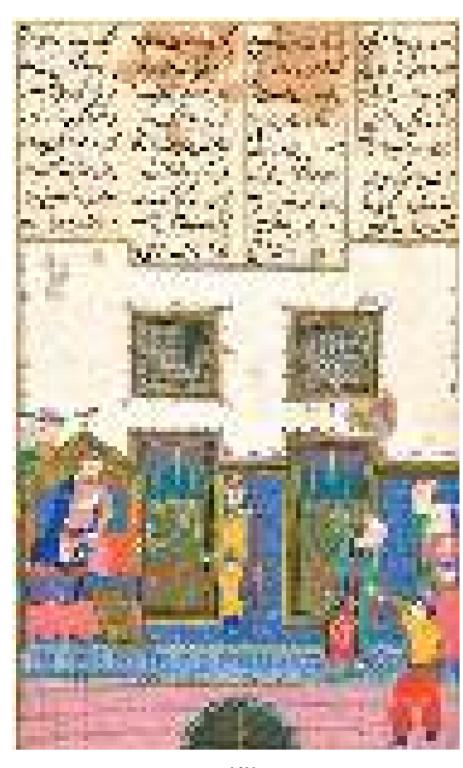
Mani as a painter, painting a dead dog on the image of a spring and pool.

According to the legend, in China Mani was challenged by a realistic painting of a spring and well. He responded by painting a dead dog on the surface of the pool, to prevent people from mistakenly attempting to draw water from it. The artist, in a brown robe, is sitting on the ground with a brush in his hand, next to the painting. Next to him is a qalamdan (pen box), a brushes case, a red bag and a broken jar.

Against a golden background there is a light pink plain dotted with flowers and framed by trees, some of them in bloom.

This was drawn by the artist who created The competition.





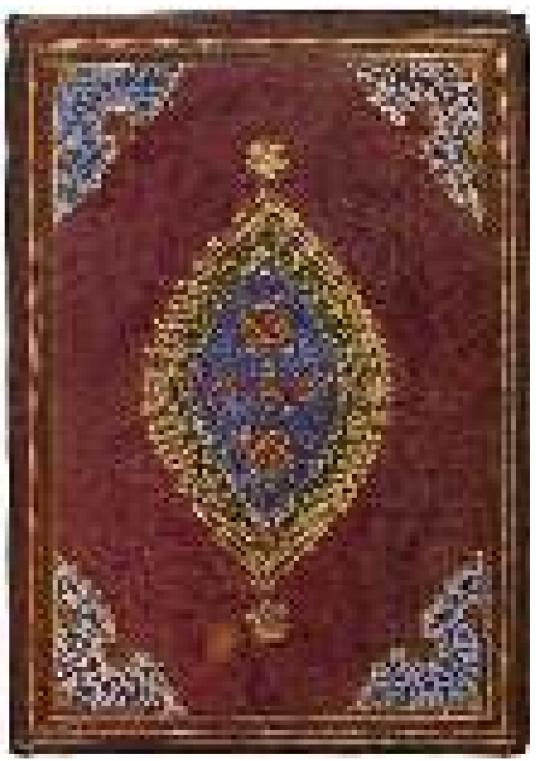
f. 306. Iskandar receives the Chinese Khagan in his palace.



Iskandar meets unveiled women.

Iskandar on a white horse and accompanied by three riders, bites his finger in surprise at the sight of women with uncovered faces.





Back cover, outer.

Back cover, inner.

One of the most important schools of calligraphy in the 15th century, the Herat school is represented by drawings and miniatures in the *Khamsa* manuscript that was created by a lady of high standing.

The exquisite miniatures in this manuscript (H.781) indicate that it was created for a member of the royal family. It was completed in Shahrukh's *kitabkhana*; while some of the miniatures repeat those of the so-called 'Baysunghur Academy', a few others display an exquisite splendour that already prefigures the rise of the late Herat school during the reign of the last Timurid, Sultan Husayn Bayqara. They are harbingers of the drawing perfection and sophisticated coloration of works by Behzad. Thus, the *Khamsa* in the Topkapı collection is one of the best examples of Herati fine art that has come down to us.

The Tabriz school encountered certain difficulties later in the 15th century, and the execution of the rebellious Sultan Iskandar forced the artists to seek the favour of his cousin Baysunghur Mirza. They arrived at his 'Academy' in two ways: firstly,

> f. 16. Faridun hunts a gazelle.

He rides a chestnut horse, chasing his prey. Three men, only their upper parts are seen, are watching him from afar. The hunt is taking place on a plain strewn with green bushes; it is framed by trees and a snake-like silvery stream. There are birds flying.







f. 48b.

by musicians, Khosrow's courtiers and others.

Khosrow and Shirin celebrate their meeting outdoors, surrounded by a beautiful landscape.

Khosrow is sitting on the throne; a servant serves him a dish. Leaning on a pillow, Shirin sits on the carpet opposite him. They are surrounded

from Shiraz, then with other artists from Tabriz in 1420. Following Baysunghur's untimely demise, they remained in Shahrukh's *kitabkhana* and created a series of illustrated copies, among which were the indispensable attributes of an enlightened ruler, the proprietary lists of illustrations for Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* and Nizami's *Khamsa*. Two copies, made for Ismat ad-Dunya, the wife of Muhammad Juki ibn Shahrukh, are truly magnificent royal treasures with truly outstanding works by Tabriz painters.

The *Khamsa* (H.781) commissioned by Muhammad Juki, copied by the calligrapher Yusuf al-Jami and illustrated by Khoja Ali al-Tabrizi, is yet further proof that the pictorial arts remained at a high level and that the school survived even Baysunghur's passing. The illustrator of the manuscript is often identified as Mawlana Al, relocated from Tabriz by Baysunghur in 1420.

The manuscript was copied in Herat for the treasury of Amir Osman Bahadur's daughter Kheir Khatun. The text is richly decorated with ornaments and 13 miniatures drawn by the artist Ali al-Tabrizi.

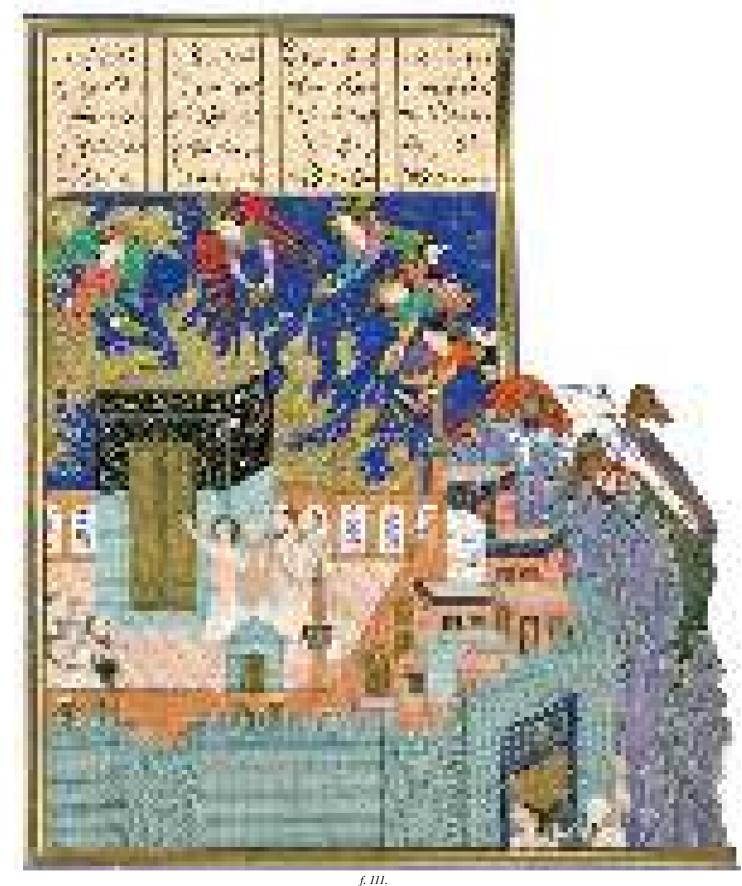
This was undoubtedly created by the hand of a Tabriz artist; we see the sacred building with its courtyard and the figure of Majnun from a bird'seye view. The pale blue and dull purple flowers in the lower, 'earthly' part of the miniature stand against a background of pinkish-yellow walls. The dynamic figures of the angels flash brightly against the azure sky; over the earth they pour divine fire whose golden, tongue-shaped flames range in size and flicker spasmodically and excitedly. Sometimes long tongues of flame give way to golden flowers which seem to have been torn from the mass and are floating in the air. Distinguished for their artistic perfection, these miniatures by Tabrizi masters sparkle like precious metals in ore.

The theme of the Ascension and the motif of sacred fire reach their peak in the famous Miraj by Sultan Muhammad (the *Khamsa* of 1539–1543).



f. 62. Farhad is received by Khosrow.





Majnun before the Ka'ba.

This is one of the most expressive and emotional miniatures: a heap of rocks rises behind a fence, among them are tents, camels and people. From a blue sky, an assembly of angels is pouring holy fire that forms a halo around the Ka'ba. The central composition builds around the figure of Majnun.

The 11 miniatures are contemporary with the manuscript completed in AH 849/1445–46 CE in Herat, while 2 belong to the later, Ottoman, period.

Representing exquisite variations of classical patterns, five miniatures reproduce, with slight alterations of detail and coloration, works created in Baghdad, Shiraz and Herat.

Some of the miniatures present high artistry and originality of interpretation, rich coloration and a search for innovation. They already herald the blooming of the Herat school of the second half of the 15th century. The most successful of them are *Khosrow and Shirin celebrate their meeting outdoors* and *Majnun before the Ka'ba*, the latter emanating a mystical aura.

There are still two more miniatures to be reviewed, in somewhat different style. These were added in Istanbul by Ottoman artists one hundred years later, in the second half of the 16th century. Certain details are clearly indicative of their origin.

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In *Bahram Gur fights two lions to win the throne*, the castle shown in the distance is obviously Turkish-style, never depicted in such form by Safavid artists. The warriors wear elongated headwear typical of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent's army. The horses are also completely different, produced under European influence.

Similar features are attributable to the characters of *Iskandar in the Land of Darkness*. Only the interesting perspective of Khizr's horse's head and neck hint at a Safavid origin.

For Stchoukine, this miniature's composition reveals its Western influence. The manner in which the forest is depicted, and the 'zigzag' patterning of soldiers down the hill probably owes something to the introduction of military formation to the Ottoman Empire.

f. 160.

Bahram Gur fights two lions to win the throne.

To capture the crown placed on the throne he must defeat the two lions guarding it. Many warriors observe the battle from a distance.

The action takes place on a plain, which transitions smoothly into a hill topped by the fortress.







f. 279b.

Iskandar in the Land of Darkness.

Iskandar and his soldiers advance in the darkness of dense vegetation, torches lighting the way. In the distance Prophet Khizr is seen to be drinking from the Fountain of Life; his horse is beside him, drinking and bathing in the stream.

These miniatures of Khamsa H.781 give us an impression of Herat pictorial art just before Shahrukh's demise. During his half-century reign, the great connoisseur of art assembled a huge library; his workshop-kitabkhana created products truly worthy of a shah. Among the many artists there was the celebrated Khoja Ali al-Tabrizi, who was, in all likelihood, the Khoja Ali Musawwir that Dust Muhammad wrote of in his account (risala). The manuscript's royal affiliation is confirmed by miniatures like Majnun before the Ka'ba, which are distinct in their elegance and magnificence of colour.

A female customer is specified on the decoratively illuminated bookplate on f.1 and in the colophon on f.325: she was Kheir Khatun, granddaughter of Abbas, one of the highest-ranking military commanders under Amir Timur. We believe this manuscript to be one of the most magnificent creations under Shahrukh's rule.

The miniatures of *Khamsa* Manuscript H.786 represent unique specimens of Central Asian, or rather Samarkand, miniatures under Ulugh Beg.

64

We know little of the pictorial art of so large a cultural centre as 15th century Samarkand. Of particular importance, therefore, is Manuscript H.786. It is dated AH 850/December 1446 – January 1447 CE, which indicates that it was completed during the reign of Ulugh Beg, son of Shahrukh and ruler of Transoxiana from his capital in Samarkand. The miniatures in this manuscript are quite particular. The artist, Sultan Ali al-Bawardi, is named, which is very uncommon for the art of the time. Indeed, while the calligrapher's name is always indicated in a colophon, the artist's name is almost never provided.

The manuscript was copied by the calligrapher Ali ibn Iskandar al-Kuhistani and is decorated with 19 miniatures and a large number of decorative pages created by Sultan Ali al-Bawardi. The piece was completed in AH Shawwal 850 /December 1446 – January 1447 CE, for Yusuf Shah ibn Amir-e Miran al-Tabrizi.

J.1.

Decorative shamsa with 4 angels in the corners, enclosed in a frame. Writing: Made in the

time of Ulugh Beg Gurgan, may his reign be everlasting.





ff. 2a-1b.

Preparations for the Shah's feast.

The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces

A young prince and princess sit on the throne, surrounded by their court. Servants stand around with their arms folded. Other servants lay the table on which there are many jars; a warden chases out an uninvited guest. People watch the feast from other buildings. The prince hands a goblet to his female companion, while a servant carries a plate

sounds of music.

The two parts of the diptych Preparations for the Shah's feast (ff. 2a-1b) form a well-coordinated composition. At its centre is the royal couple, whence the composition develops in both directions. All the characters are frozen, even the female dancers have shuddered to a halt. The characters' silhouettes are elongated, smooth and rigid. This monotony is compensated for by bright coloration, with azure blue, orange, red and green tones glowing brightly against a golden background, emphasized further by large grey sections of flooring.

towards them. Two female dancers twirl to the





ff. 6a-5b.

Illuminated double-paged frontispiece.







f. 49.

Khosrow and Shirin feasting in the palace.





f. 50.

Angels hover in the sky bearing gifts.

This is a decorative page with small rectangles staggered between others that contain quatrains.





f. 53.

Khosrow chases Bahram Chubineh's army.

The composition extends beyond the right side of the frame.

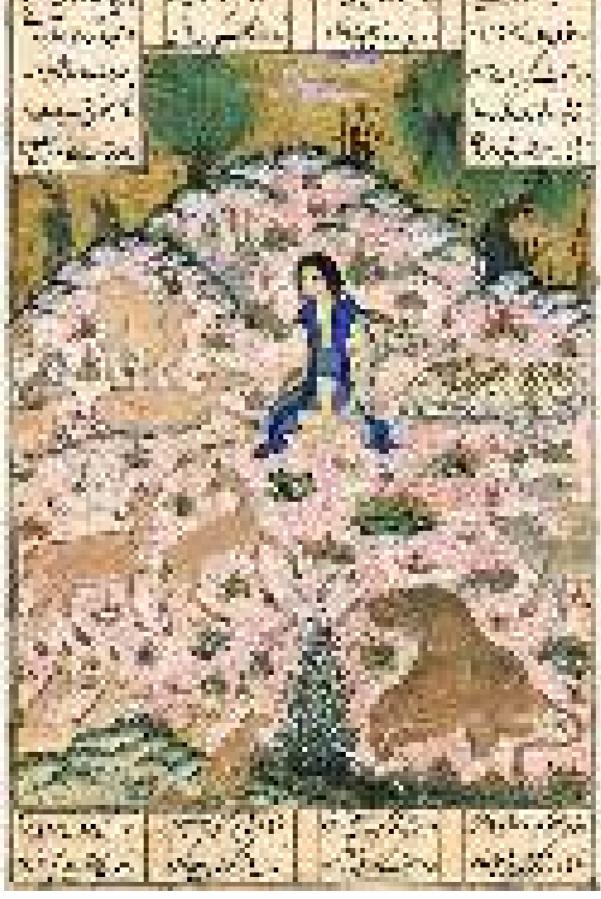




Majnun rescues two gazelles. He gives the hunter his horse and clothes to set the captured animals free.







f. 126.

 ${\it Majnun~in~the~desert, surrounded~by~wild~animals.}$

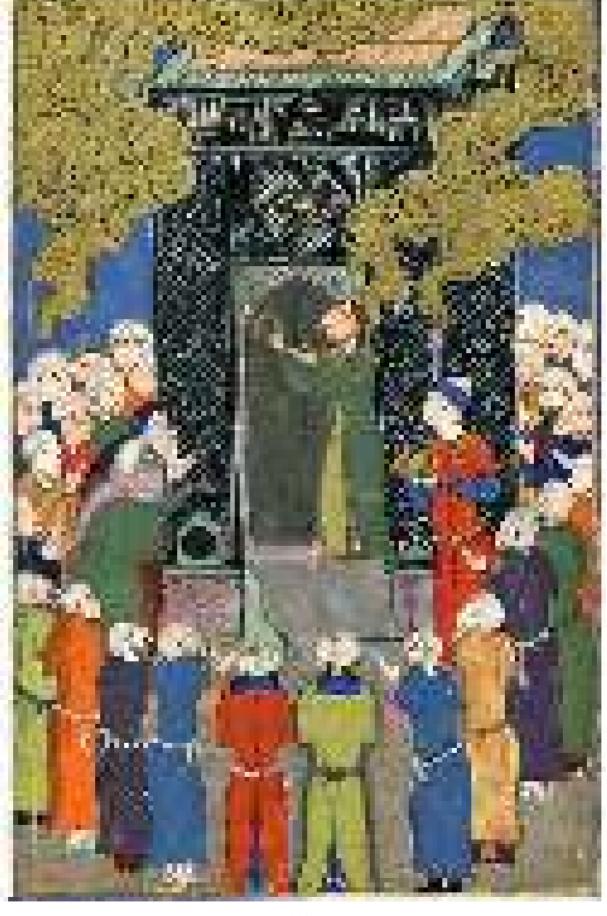
He strokes a fallow deer lying at his feet. Different pairs of animals surround him. Pacified by the haplessly smitten Majnun, predators coexist peacefully with grazing animals.





f. 140.

Leyli and Majnun lie unconscious in the desert. ${\it Two people are trying to revive them; fellow tribespeople are watching from a far.}$ Nearby, a lion is tearing a Bedouin apart.



f. 239.

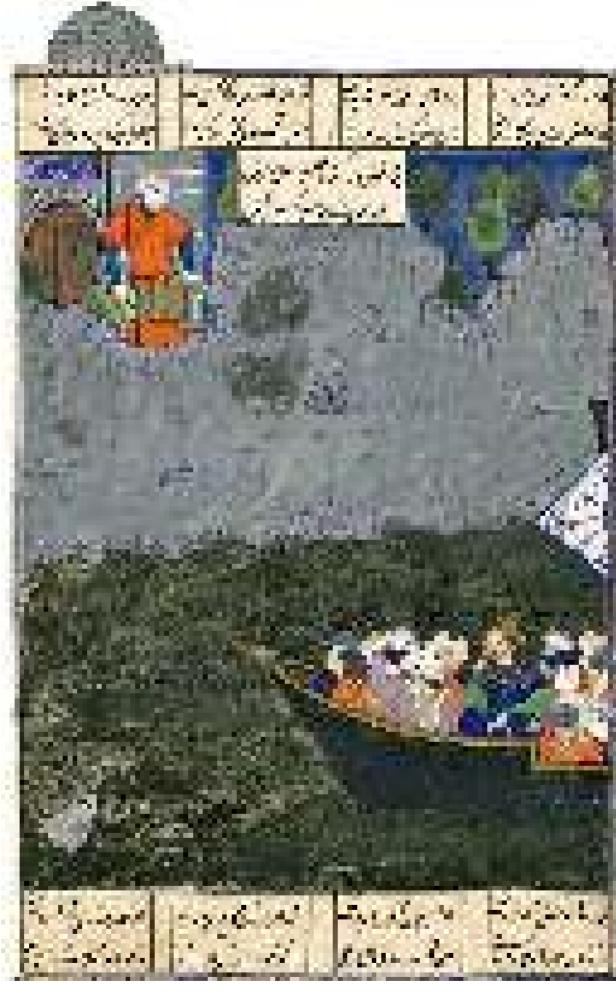
Iskandar before the Ka'ba.

A crowd forms a semicircle around him.

Clouds descend on the building where a black rock embedded in the wall is seen.

The composition is incomplete.





f. 307. Iskandar's sea voyage.

15

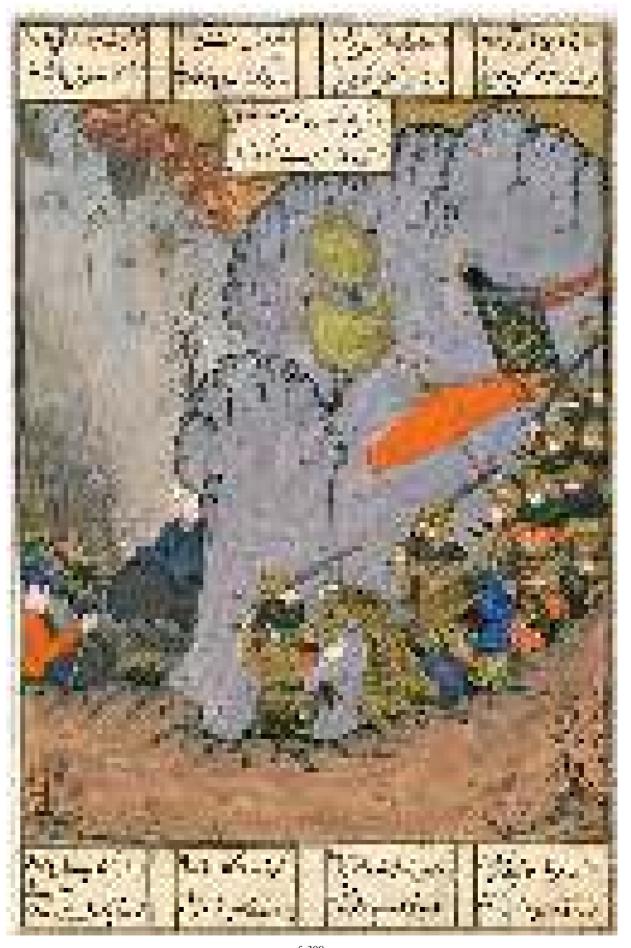
he Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapi Palace Library Mast

The miniatures in this manuscript do not belong to a single artist, although the colophon states otherwise. There were at least two artists, one of them Sultan Ali al-Bawardi, the creator of 14 miniatures. The other one, unknown, drew the rest at a later date.

Al-Bawardi's fourteen works are markedly forceful in stroke, producing notably heavy, rigid human figures: they are massive, especially the men; nonetheless, the women impress with their bulky, albeit inflexible grace. In most cases, the artist sacrifices momentum for the sake of pictorial stability. The impulse of a gesture quite frequently transforms into a pose, as if to preserve clarity of form and continuity of line.

This artist seems to have had a penchant for decoration and a subtle awareness of nature. The landscape he draws takes the form of a magnificent carpet with a blooming bush under a golden sky in which birds fly. Architecture is represented in all the splendour of ceremonial decoration: with polychromatic ceramics on the walls, embroidered curtains over the doors, bright carpets etc.

According to the colophon, Sultan Ali al-Bawardi was also responsible for a number of the decorative pages, on which images of angels add to the ornamentation.



f. 309.

Iskandar heads into battle against the Yajhuj and Majhuj tribes (Gog and Magog).

Workers are raising a wall, and savages look on from behind the hills.







A large, richly ornamented medallion containing an inscription: information about the customer, calligrapher, and artist.

Then there is praise for Nizami and the date.

The names of the second artist, the calligrapher and the customer for this exquisite manuscript remain unknown, not being found even in other sources. The only other known fact is that this manuscript of Nizami's work was copied during the reign of Ulugh Beg Gurgan, who ruled Transoxiana from his capital in Samarkand for his father Shahrukh. Indeed, his father's authority over him was quite nominal, so his subjects referred to Ulugh Beg as Sultan and regarded him as an independent ruler. It is quite likely that these miniatures and decorative pages were created in Samarkand.

Thus, we know next to nothing about the 15th century school of miniature painting in Transoxiana; however, the miniatures discussed above exhibit a Herati influence, especially those created by the second artist. Sultan Ali al-Bawardi's compositions are rather more particular. They are evidence of what might subsequently have become of pictorial art at the court of Ulugh Beg, who was keen on astronomy but was also a poet and an amateur artist with knowledge of all poetry's inner workings.

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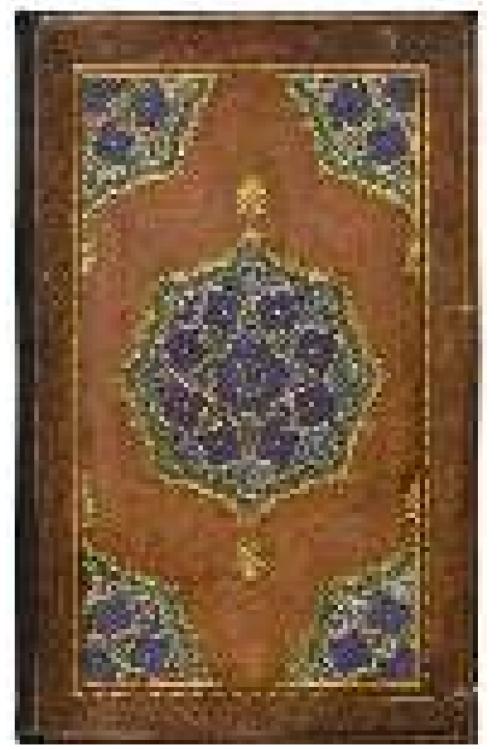
The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces

After the Topkapı Palace's Nizami manuscripts from the 1450s, we discover the following manuscript (H.761), which is dated AH 866/1461 CE and probably originated in Baghdad. This assumption is supported by the fact that it was made for Pir Budaq Qaraqoyunlu, then ruler of that city. Its stylistic features, ancient artistic traditions and the legacy of the Tabriz-Baghdad school of miniature surely left their distinctive imprint.

As for their artistic and technical qualities, these miniatures are the best of their time in pictorial refinement and





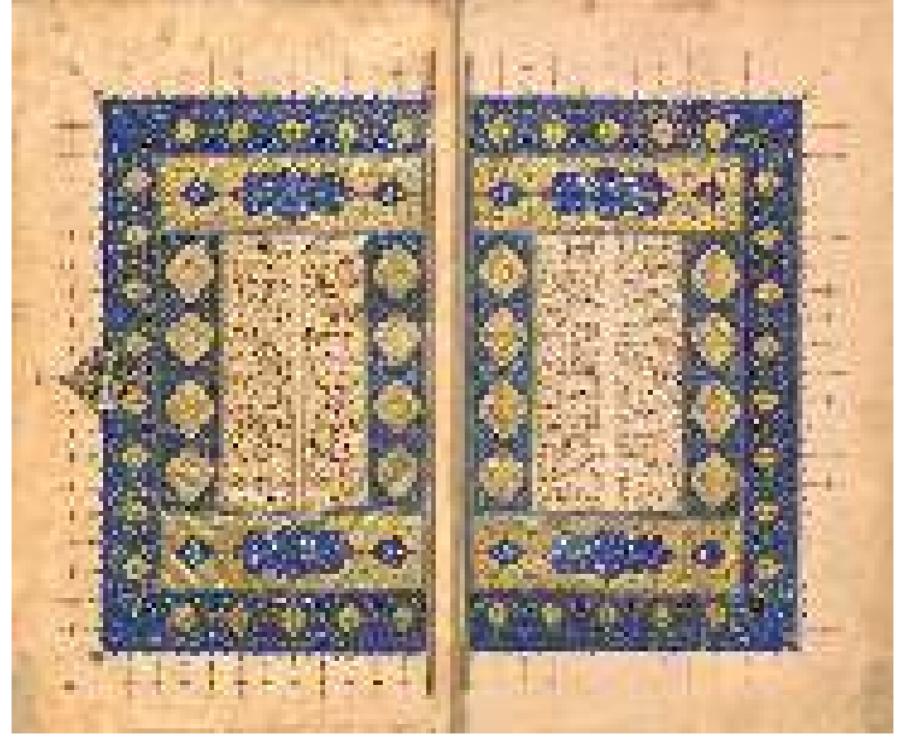


Back cover, inner.



richness of coloration. And indeed, in this Baghdad manuscript we discover exquisite strokes and a finesse in the drawing that certainly could not be said of the crude rigidity of most Turkman Commercial manuscripts.

The colours vary from bright, even dazzling to the restrained, displaying as a whole an abundance of tones and shades. These qualities and skills bring this manuscript of AH 866/1461 CE stylistically close to contemporary Herati works.



ff. 4a-3b.

Illuminated double-paged sarloukh, with seal.

Work on the poem Leyli and Majnun from the Istanbul list of manuscripts of Nizami's Khamsa

(H.761) was commenced in Herat under Baysunghur by Jafar Tabrizi, head of his kitabkhana; it was illustrated with 4 miniatures.

According to the colophon on f.200, the first 200 pages were copied on AH 20 Rabi I 866/23 December 1461 CE by the calligrapher Sheikh Mahmoud Pir Budaqi for Sultan Pir Budaq. They are richly decorated and illustrated with 16 miniatures.

According to the second colophon on f.309, the next 109 pages were copied and completed 15 years later (in AH Sha'ban 881/November-December 1476 CE) by Fahrad-din Ahmad and requested by Abul-Fath Sultan Khalil; the whole manuscript was to be presented to Abul-Nasr Sultan Hasan Bahadur Khan (Uzun Hasan Aghqoyunlu).

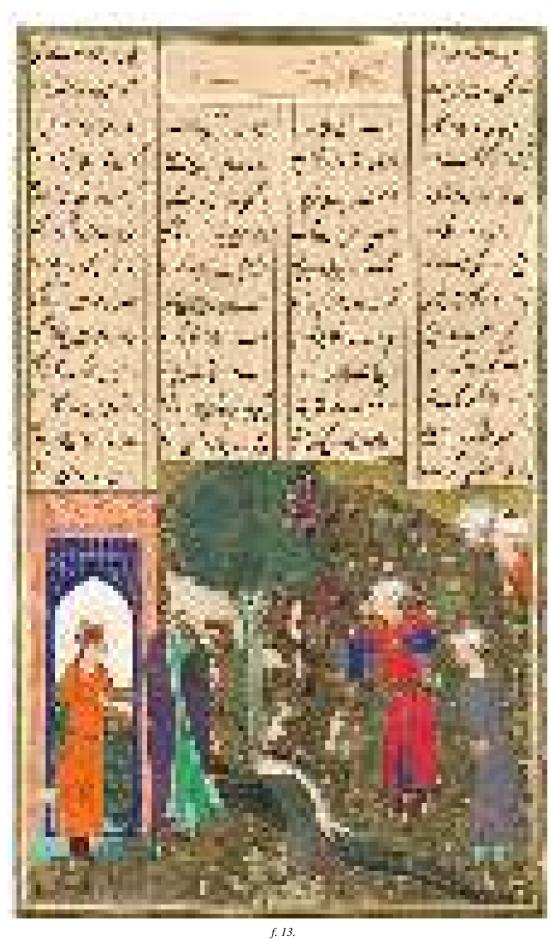


f. 4b.

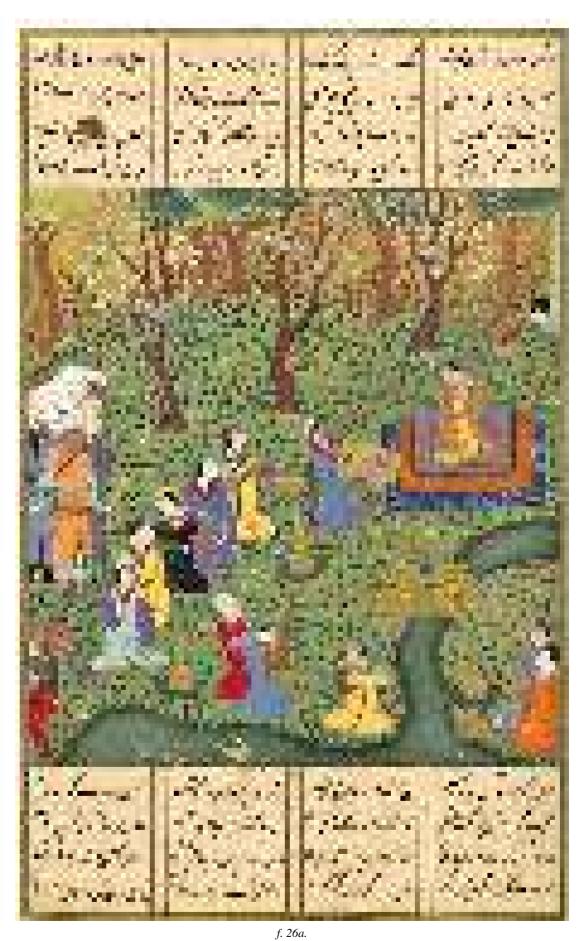
The Prophet, mounted on Buraq and escorted by angels, passes above the Ka'ba.







Sultan Sanjar and the Old Woman.



Shirin looks at Khosrow's portrait.



torians as a connoisseur and patron of arts, so it is no surprise that the illustrated manuscript under review was created for his *kitabkhana*. The appendage "Pir Budaqi" to the calligrapher's name designates his service to the prince. Apart from our Manuscript

Back in AH 866/1461 CE, when the first part of

the manuscript was completed, Baghdad was taken from the Timurids by Jahanshah Qaraqoyunlu. Jahanshah appointed his son Pir Budaq ruler of the conquered province. The latter is known to art his-

H.761, this calligrapher is known to have copied three other illuminated and illustrated pieces for the same patron.

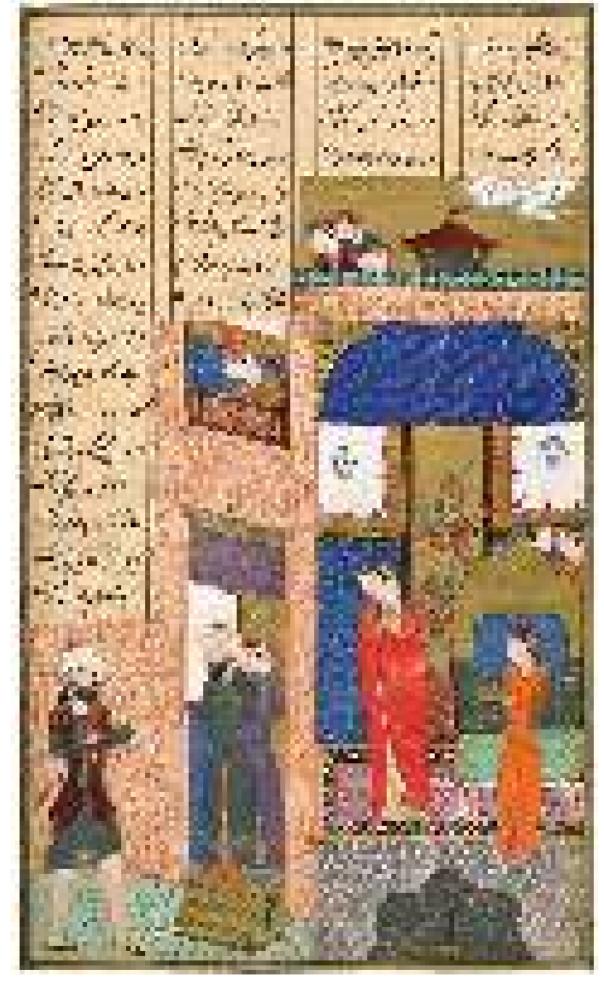
For reasons that are not clear, work on the manuscript was stopped after *The Seven Beauties*, thus leaving the *Khamsa* incomplete.

f. 46.

Khosrow slaying a lion with his bare hands to protect Shirin, while two servants observe the feat.







f. 57b. Farhad before Shirin's palace.



After a break, the last poem, *Iskandarnameh*, was completed; but it was by then a completely different manuscript created by a different calligrapher for a new customer, Sultan Khalil, who was also going to present it to his father Uzun Hasan.

A very great ruler of the Aghqoyunlu dynasty, Uzun Hasan defeated Jahanshah and assumed his throne in Tabriz. It was then that the name and title of Uzun Hasan, the intended recipient of the whole manuscript, were added in two medallions. The new part, however, remained unillustrated. All covers of the manuscript are richly decorated.

Neither the date of completion nor the name of the royal customer, nor that of the calligrapher, are provided in the colophon.





f. 63b. Farhad carries Shirin and her horse on his shoulders.

One is almost lost for words to describe this masterpiece by Tabrizi artists. The rude mountain landscape occupies the entire space of this extensive panorama. Purple and pale blue rocks dotted with green trees, the diagonal of a silvery brook crossing the space all form a cosmic chaos against a golden sunset-lit background. People are lost in this majestic landscape; the action itself is in the background, giving way to this exciting landscape. Shirin is in grey, Farhad in dark blue. There are girls in bright red and green dresses.

Here the Tabriz style regains its former grandeur: the changes of that period are represented by the large format and sophisticated spatial compositions, with a particular colouristic palette beyond previous Herati pieces.

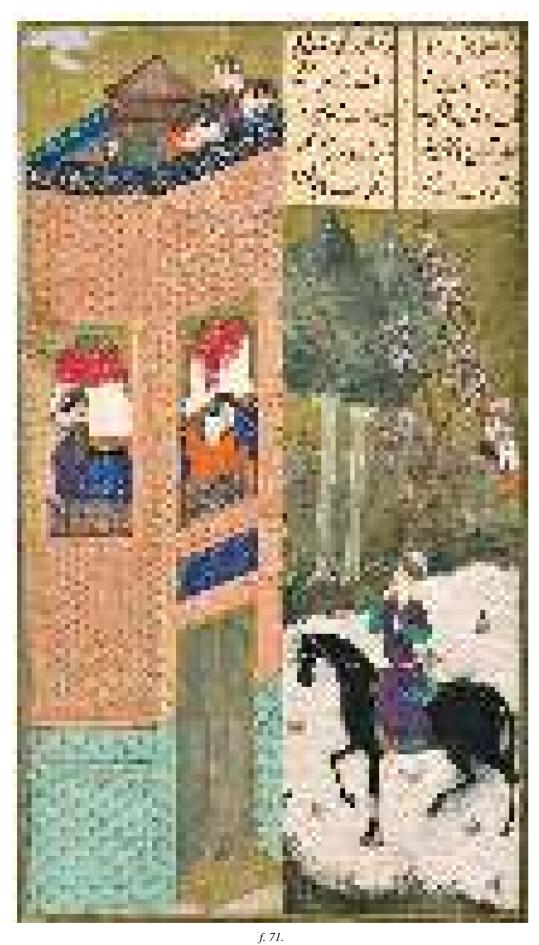






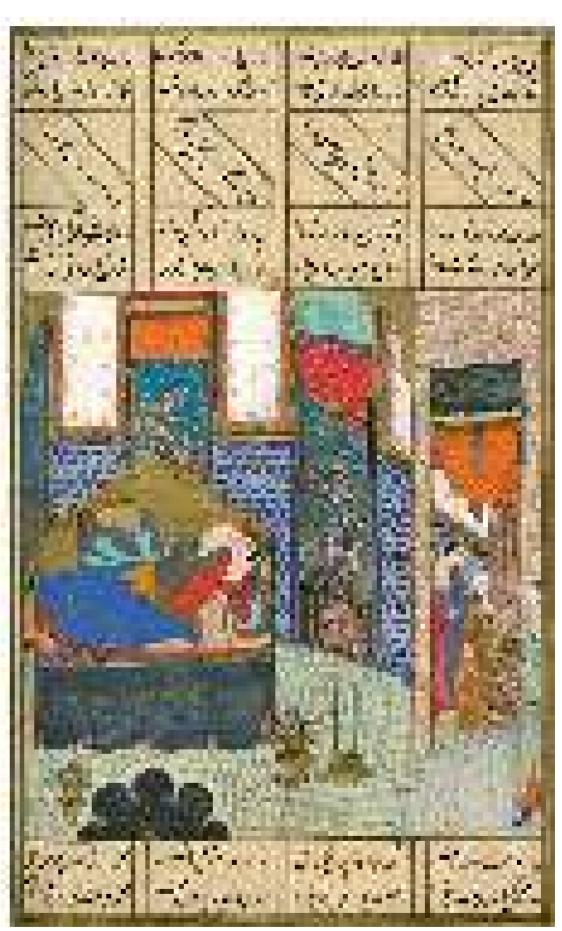






Khosrow before Shirin's castle.

Khosrow in violet garments and on a black horse, bites his finger in surprise and awe of Shirin's beauty. She is wearing an orange dress. Yellowish-pink and jasper-green architecture stands against a grey background and golden sky.



f. 83.

 ${\it Khosrow\ and\ Shirin\ in\ their\ bridal\ chamber}.$

The prince (a beardless youth) and princess lie on the golden marriage bed. The interior is lavishly decorated. Two maids stand by the door, with a white eunuch holding a water jug and guarding the room.

ff. 96a-95b.
Exquisitely decorated pages.







f. 115.

Majnun watches the battle of the tribes.

8/



The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces



Leyli and Majnun at school.





f. 123.

Majnun, Leyli and an old man among animals.

89





f. 125.

Majnun in the desert among wild animals.

f. 140. Majnun and Leyli faint.





f. 153.

Fitnah watches as Bahram Gur hunts an onager.

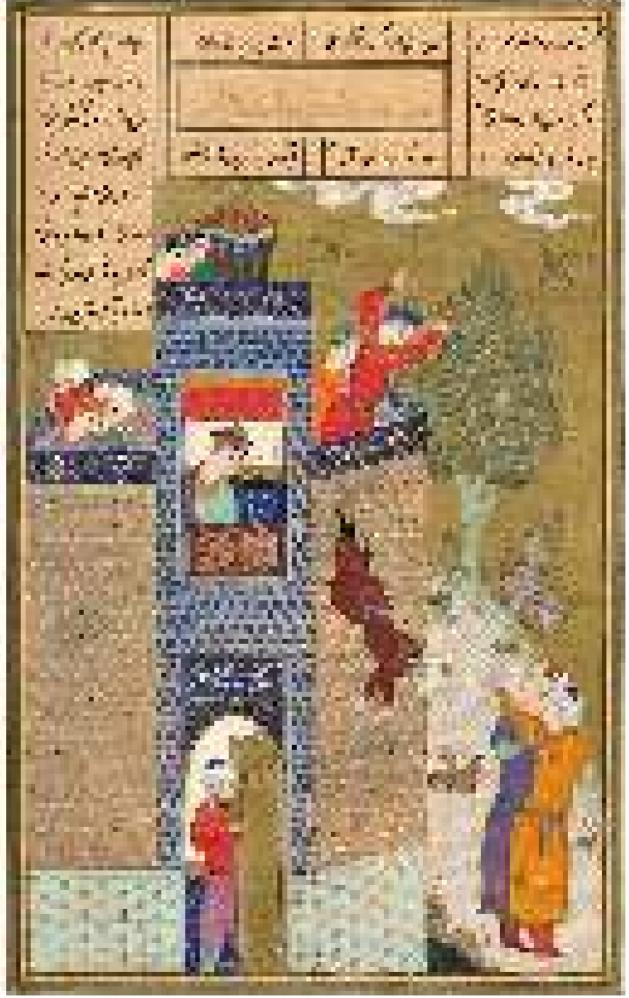
This expressive miniature with the dynamic Bahram at its centre appears almost unchanged in many subsequent copies until the mid-16th century.



The 16 miniatures from *Khamsa* H.761 reviewed above are notably uniform in style and artistic technique. This is clear evidence of their being the works of a single artist, although his name is unknown to us.

Clearly evident, too, is the tendency to elongate the human figures, rendering them flexible and graceful. At the same time, however, in the so-called "Turkman Commercial Style", the reverse process was seen to be spreading across the south of Iran, notably in Shiraz; the growing tendency there was to depict figures as stocky and dumpy.

The illustrations in this manuscript, exquisitely drawn and abundantly patterned, are the artistic peak of their epoch. This Tabriz-Baghdad style work has an astounding flexibility and finesse in its linear composition, in contrast with the rigid, angular and inflexible design of Shiraz-Turkman Style miniatures.

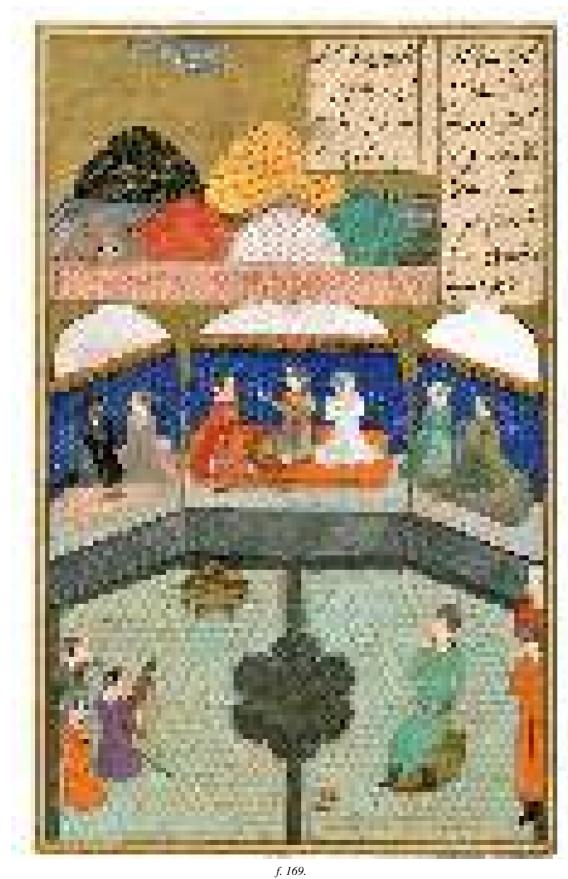


f. 156.

Simnar is thrown from the top of Khawarnaq Palace.

The miniature resembles Timurid prototypes in its schematic solution and architectural decoration, in which the high, tiled building occupies most of the composition.







Bahram Gur in the secret room with a series of seven portraits.

f. 271a. Shamsa.

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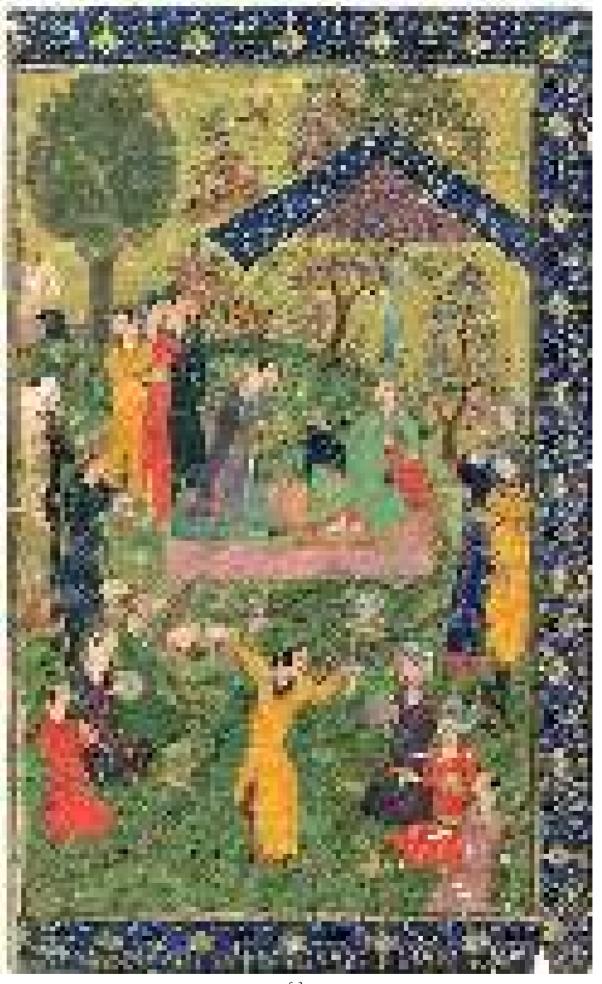
Among the miniatures produced in the latter part of the 15th century, a significant number were created in Shiraz, and the south generally, and differ greatly in style from those created by other schools. These miniatures, known as "Turkman Commercial Style" (see Chapter 3), were not created to a specific customer's order, but produced to supply general market demand.

They are somewhat archaic and primitive; their peculiar anatomical construction recalls late 14th century Muzaffarid figures: low and stocky, with disproportionately large heads on narrow shoulders and ungainly movement. They look more like marionettes than heroes of epic poems.

The animals are no less ridiculous; less the strong and beautiful horses of the previous century than rides on a carousel. Once luxurious, the architecture in these miniatures is merely primitive background. Landscapes are similarly degraded; colossal panoramas diluted to the extreme.

Composition and colour are as simple as can be. This style is seen in Manuscripts R.874; H.754; H.768; H.771; H.1008; R.857; H.778; H.767; H.769; R.863. Thus, these are examples of late 15th century Shiraz.

The *Khamsa* Manuscript R.874 is illustrated by 16 miniatures. It was completed from 26 April 1476–14 April 1477 in Shiraz; no calligrapher's name or places of origin are indicated.



f. 3.

The young prince feasts outdoors.

 $(Rare\ illustration)$

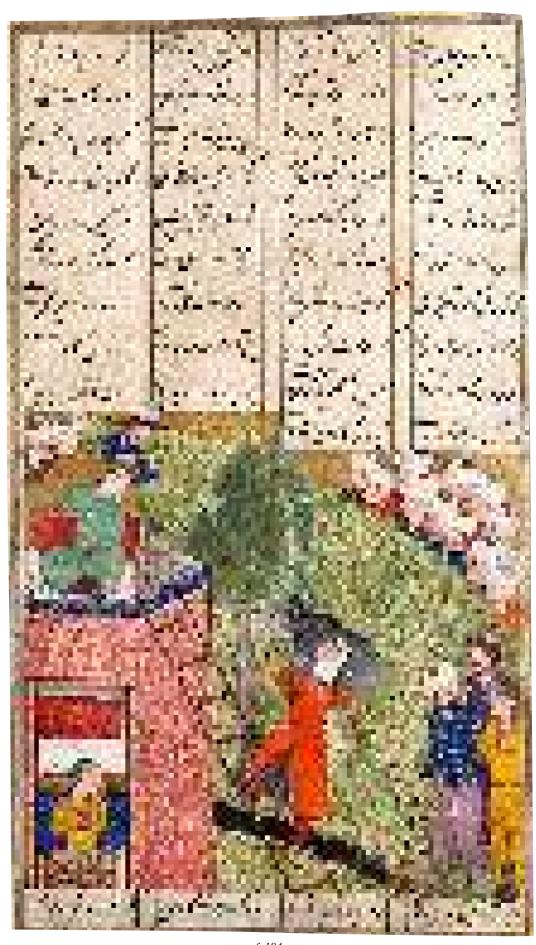
The ruler, a beardless youth, is sitting on a carpet under a canopy. Kneeling before him, a young lady offers him a goblet. He is surrounded by servants, pages, courtiers, male and female musicians and dancers. The environment around the prince is depicted as green meadows through which a stream flows; blossoming trees tower against a golden sunset. This image is probably the right side of a diptych; the left side is missing. The miniature is framed on three sides.



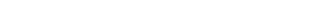
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f. 141.

Majnun watches the battle of the tribes.



f. 184. Fitnah lifts the calf on her shoulders.



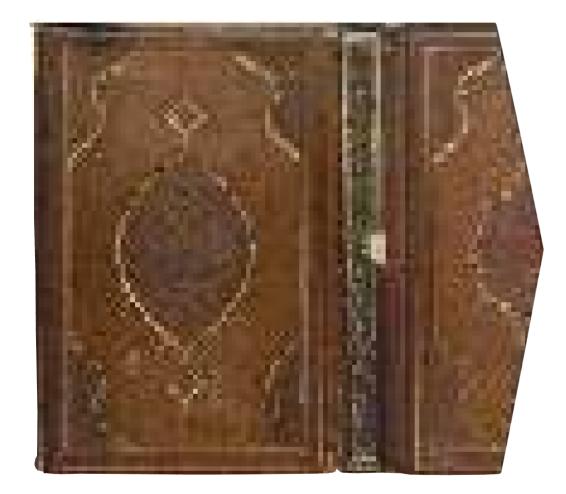


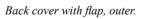
f. 185. Bahram and Fitnah on the hunting ground.

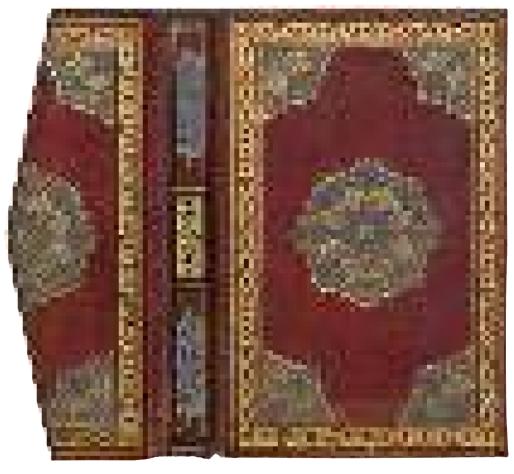


f. 269. Nushaba shows Iskandar his own portrait.









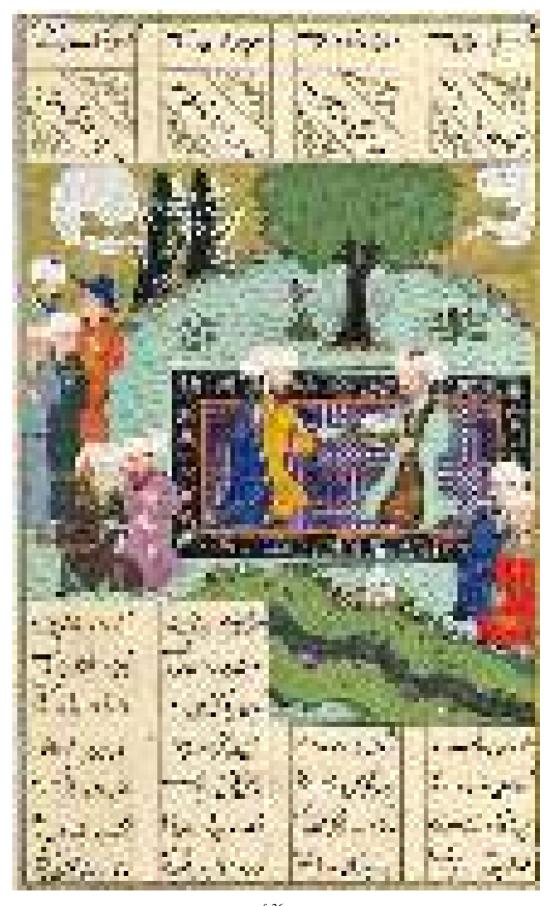
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The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.754, created by Murshid al-Din al-Katib. Completed from AH 888/ December 1483–January 1484 CE in Shiraz. Decoration and 28 miniatures.





f. 4. Left side of a double sarloukh.



f. 26.
Two academics sitting on a carpet, surrounded by their students and in discussion.





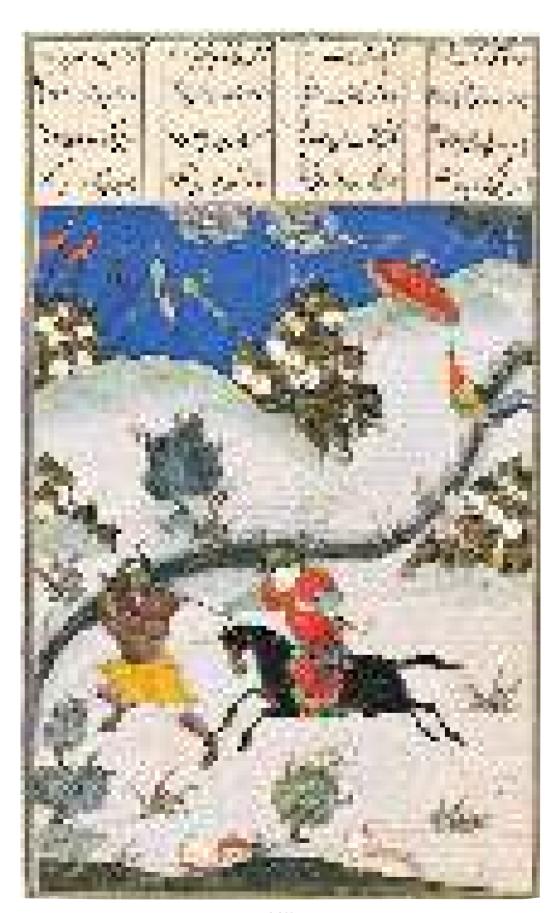
f. 43.

One of the Khosrow's guards picks grapes without permission from a peasant's garden.

f. 42. Young Khosrow feasts.



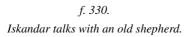
f. 129. Majnun before the Ka'ba.

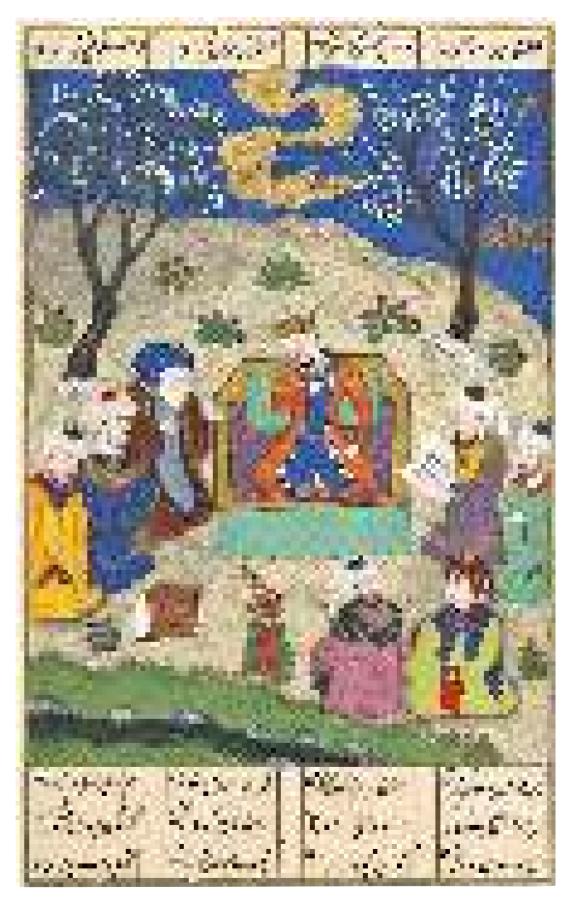


f. 311.
Riding a horse, Iskandar captures the Rus's Div (ogre) with his lasso.









f. 342. Iskandar and the seven sages.

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The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces

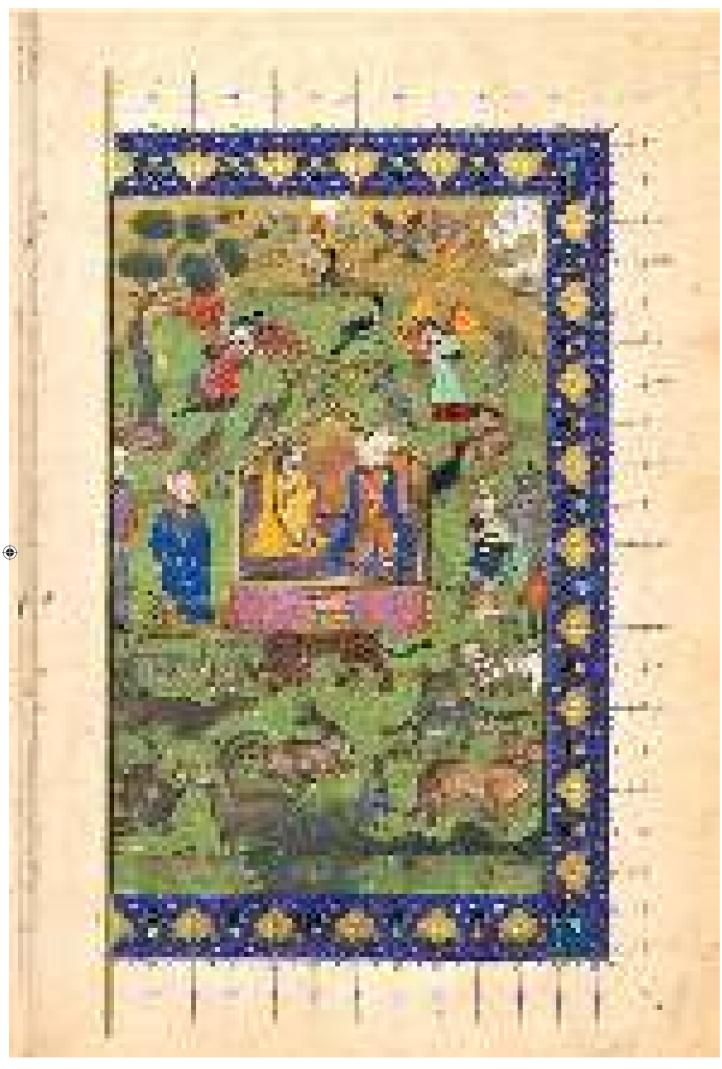
102

The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.768 was created by Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Masud from 9 November to 9 December 1485. The place of origin is not indicated. Decoration and 27 miniatures.

The miniatures in this manuscript belong to the "Turkman Commercial Style" and were most likely created in Shiraz where that style was dominant at the time. For the most part they are of good quality.







ff. 8a-7b. King Solomon and Bilkis (the Queen of Sheba) surrounded by their suite and a group of animals.







The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces



J. 132.
Seated on the throne, Nofal speaks with two old men.

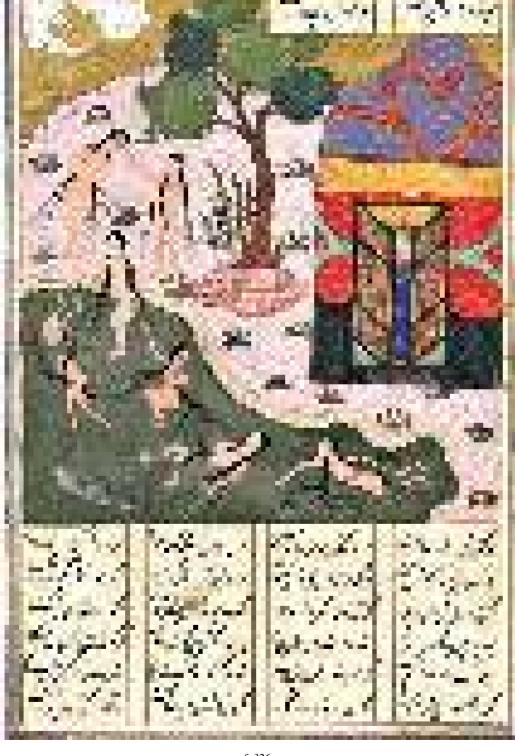
Majnun watches the battle of the tribes.

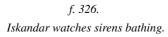


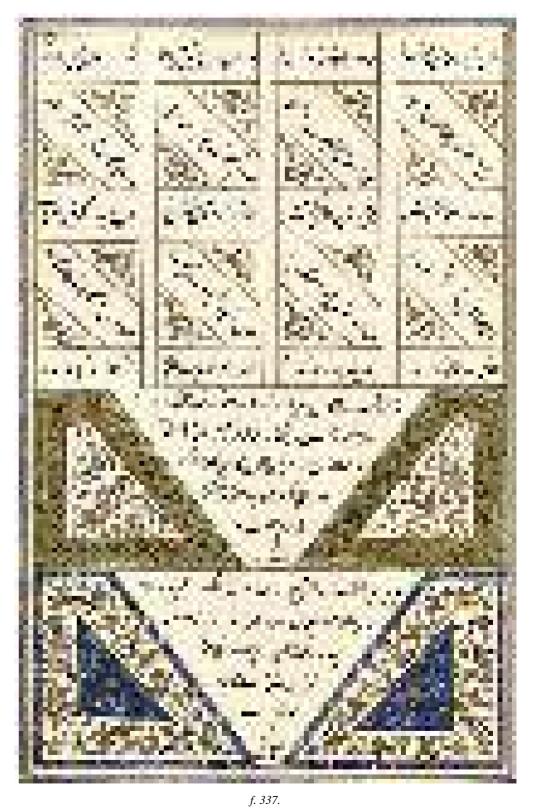


The Fairy Queen and a traveller.

f. 286.
Riding a horse, Iskandar captures a Rus warrior with a lasso.





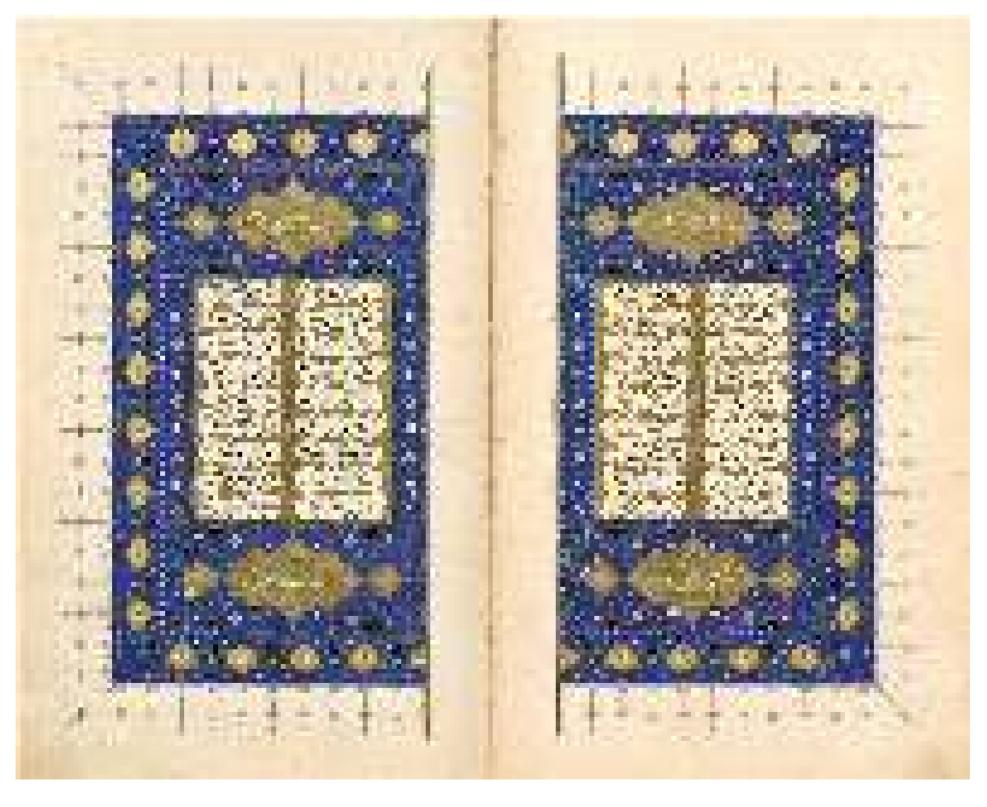


J. 337. Colophon.

106



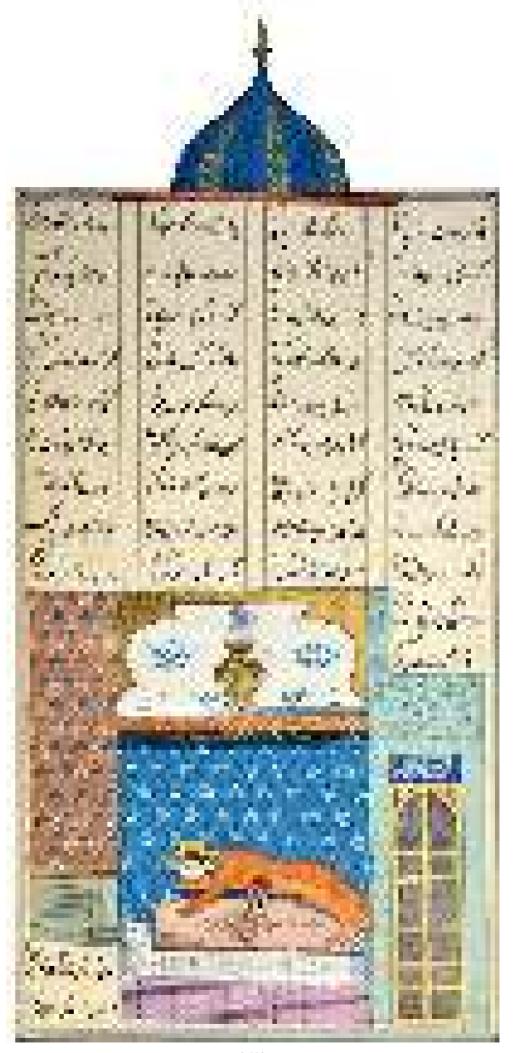
The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.771 was created by the calligrapher Hussein Gulu from AH 895/25 November - 25 December 1489 CE. It is beautifully presented and contains 30 miniatures.



ff. 2a-1b.

Exquisitely decorated pages.

f. 75. Farhad before Shirin's palace.



f. 113. Shirin commits suicide.





Leyli and Majnun in the desert.



Bahram watches as his hanged vizier is pierced with arrows.

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The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.1008. The calligraphy was worked in Shiraz by Sheikh Murshid ad-Din, who completed his work in AH 895/22 February – 23 March 1490 CE.

The first 322 pages are dedicated to Nizami's *Khamsa*, and the following 212 to the *Khamsa* by Khosrow Dehlavi. Our review covers just 7 of the 35 miniatures in the first volume.

The miniatures are typical of the "Turkman Commercial Style", then dominant in Shiraz. They are of good quality; delicate in their drawing, vivid and bright in colour; the human figures are better than is usual in this style, fewer short figures, many slender and neat ones.

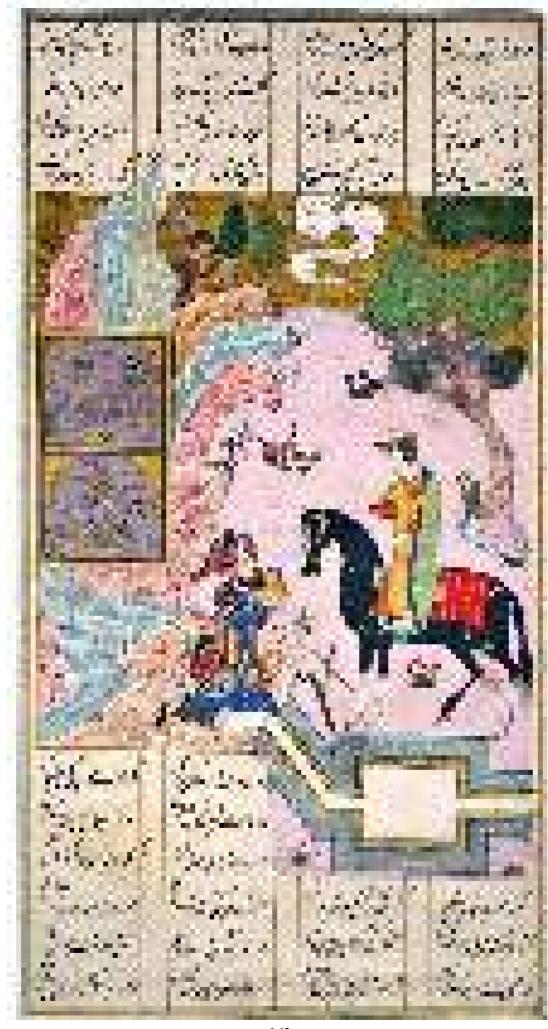


f. 22.

The truthful old man, a hangman, and shah.

The noble old man, accompanied by the hangman, complains to the unjust shah.





f. 62.
Farhad offers Shirin a jug of milk.

Ш



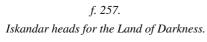
f. 204.
Bahram Gur and the shepherd who hanged his dog.



Bahram Gur attends his vizier's execution.

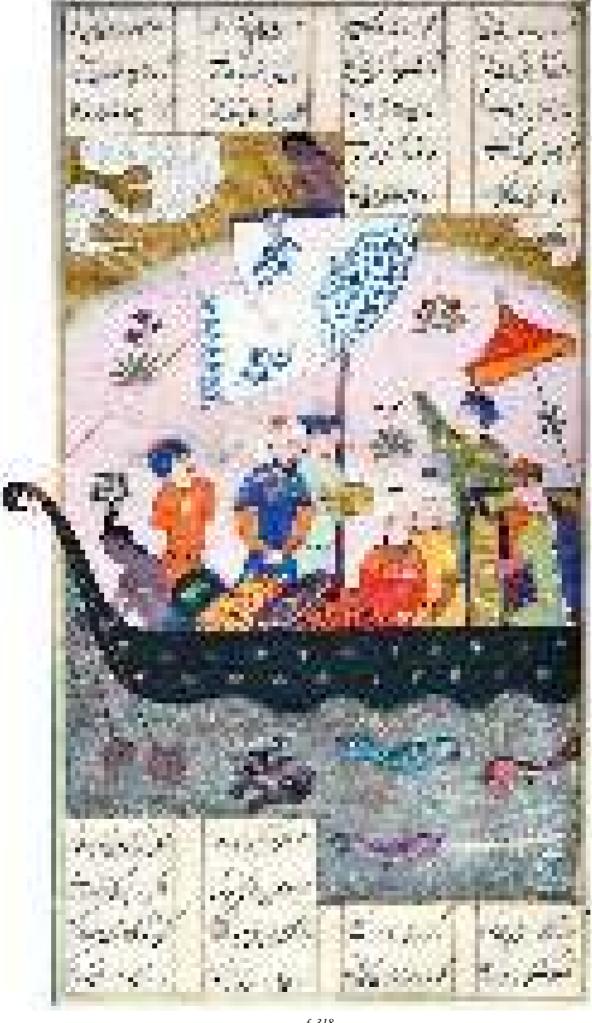








f. 284. Khizr and Ilyas by the Fountain of Life.



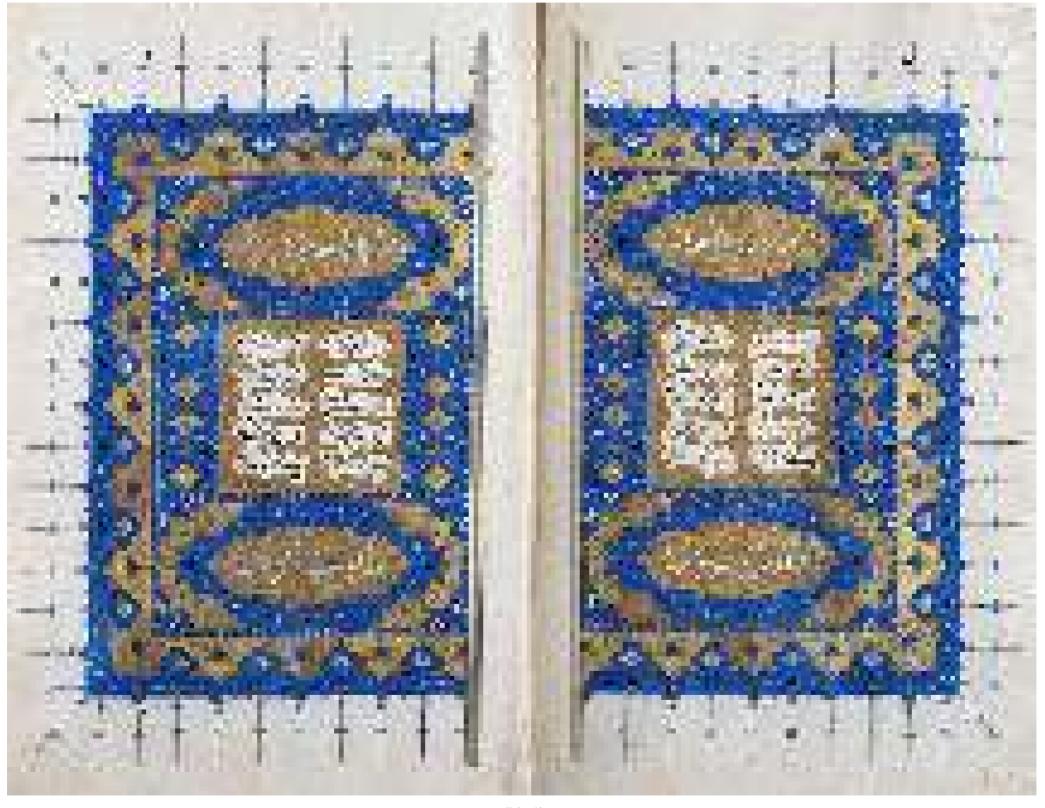
f. 318. Iskandar's sea voyage.





The *Khamsa* Manuscript R.857 was created by calligrapher Muhammad al-Husseini. The date and place of origin are not indicated. Decoration and 21 miniatures.

The miniatures in this manuscript are in the "Turkman Commercial Style"; they are of average quality, with vivid colours. The manuscript was completed late in the $15^{\rm th}$ century, probably in Shiraz.



ff. 2a-1b.

Exquisitely decorated pages of Sarloukh.

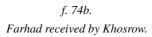


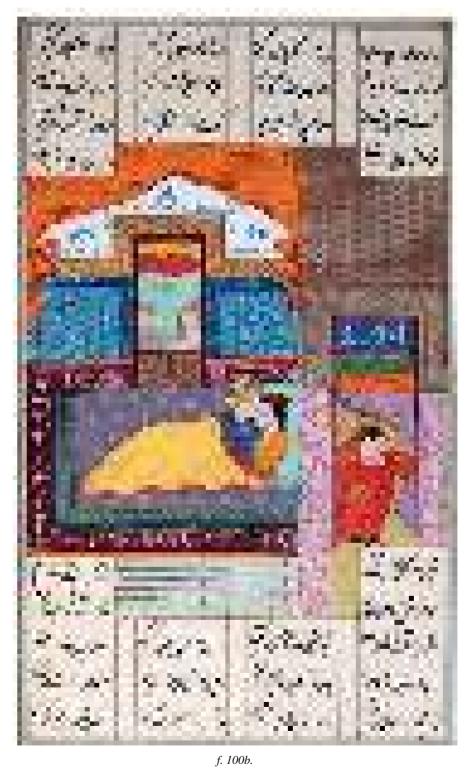
f. 57. Khosrow and Shirin faint at their meeting. (Rarely illustrated plot)



Khosrow slaying a lion with his bare hands to protect Shirin.



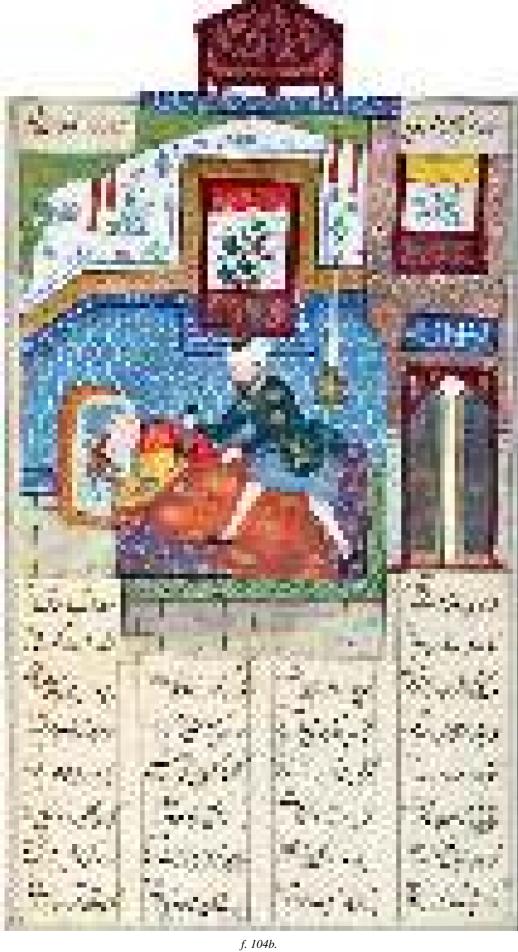




Khosrow and Shirin in their bridal chamber.

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f. 104b.

The assassination of Khosrow.



Majnun before the Ka'ba.

The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.778 is illustrated with 26 miniatures. The place of origin and calligrapher's name are not indicated. Date of copying: AH 900/2 October 1494 – 20 September 1495 CE.

The miniatures are attributed to the "Turkman Commercial Style", and are generally of poor quality.



Iskandar attends the execution of Darius's assassins.



Byzantine and Chinese painters vie in a trial of skill.

igin are not indicated. Considering, however, that this artist, known as the "Qibla of Secretaries" and "Sultan of Calligraphers", worked in Herat in the 15th century, it can be safely assumed that the manuscript was created there and then. The manuscript

Sultan Ali al-Mashhadi; the date and place of or-

The Khamsa Manuscript H.767 was copied by

contains 34 illustrations. Beautiful old binding. Several of Suleyman the Magnificent's seals indi-

The illustrations in this manuscript were the work of several artists, but in a uniform "Turkman

cate attachment to his library.

Commercial Style". They are of medium quality and were completed late in the 15th century.

f. 23b.

Jesus and the dead dog.







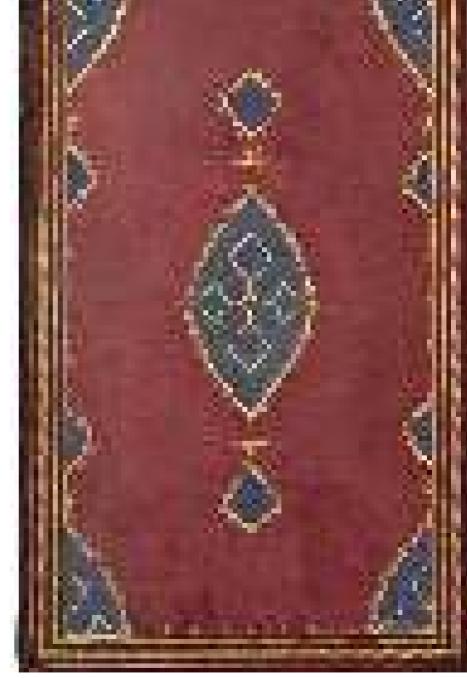
ff. 2a-1b.

Exquisitely decorated pages of the sarloukh.

The Khamsa Manuscript H.769 dated AH 905/ August 1499 – June 1500 CE, without any other indication as to its origin. Contains 44 miniatures.

The miniatures in this manuscript are in the socalled "Turkman Commercial Style", dominant in Shiraz in the last quarter of the 15^{th} century.





Back cover, outer.

Back cover, inner.







f. 99.

An old man is sent to Farhad to tell him about Shirin's death.







f. 90.
Farhad received by Khosrow.



Khosrow and Shirin in their bridal chamber.





f. 158. Majnun by Leyli's tent.



f. 174.

Majnun in chains, brought by the old woman to Leyli's tent.



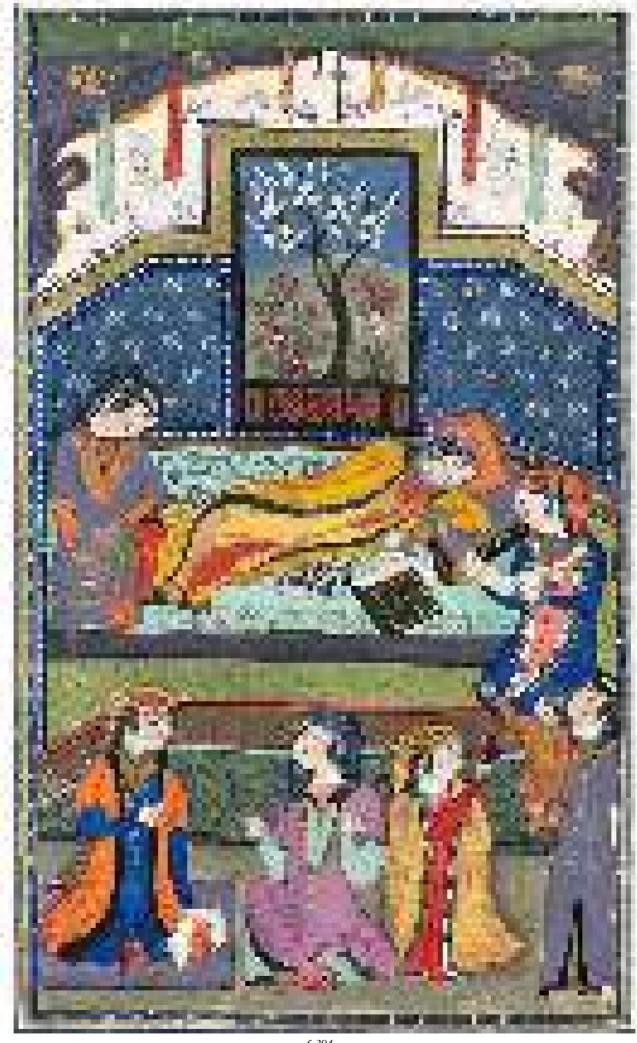


f. 307. Tutyanush executed by command of the Zangi Padishah. (Rare illustration)



The funeral of Iskandar.





f. 394.

Maria of Egypt listens to Iskandar's letter.

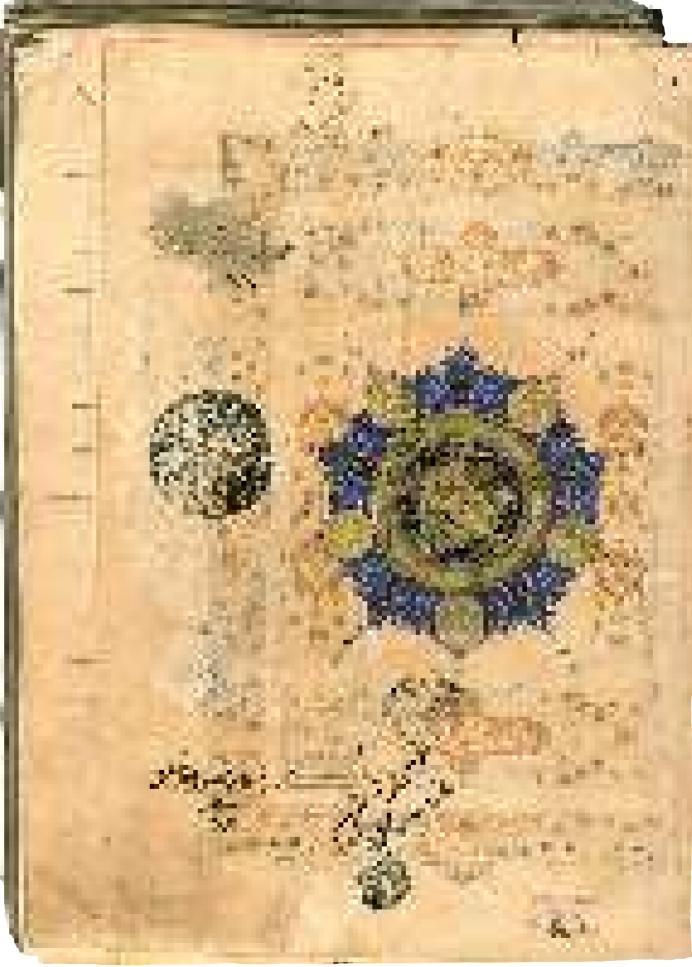
Maria of Egypt, the queen of Syria, is listening as Iskandar's letter is read to her. She is lying, surrounded by servants. She studied sciences under Aristotle.

A magnificent and expressive painting in bright colours.

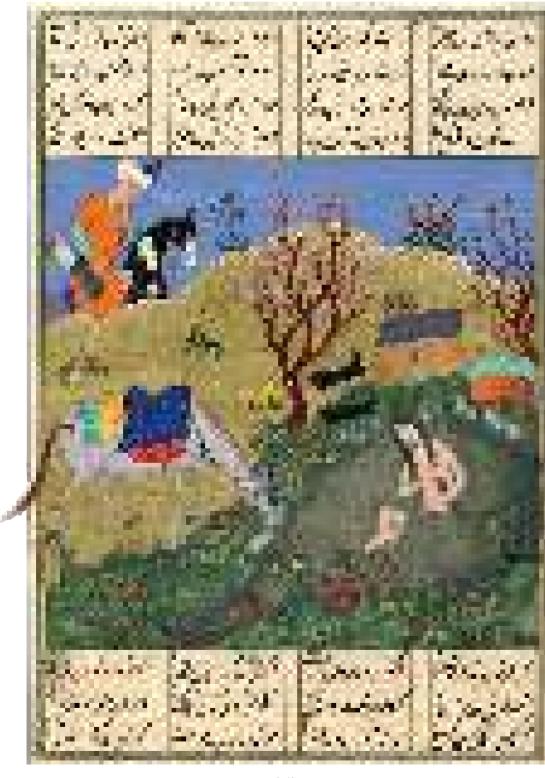
Rare Illustration.

The Khamsa Manuscript R.863 dated AH 906/20 February – 20 March 1501 CE. The calligrapher's name and place of origin are not indicated. Contains 18 miniatures.

Representing the Bukhara style, the miniatures were created 30 years later. It is quite likely that this copy was presented to Sultan Murad III in 1594 by an envoy of Uzbek Khan Abdullah II together with two manuscripts of the Qur'an and a Shahnameh manuscript.



f. 3. Seal on the page with a shamsa-rosette, illuminated poem titles. Badly worn.



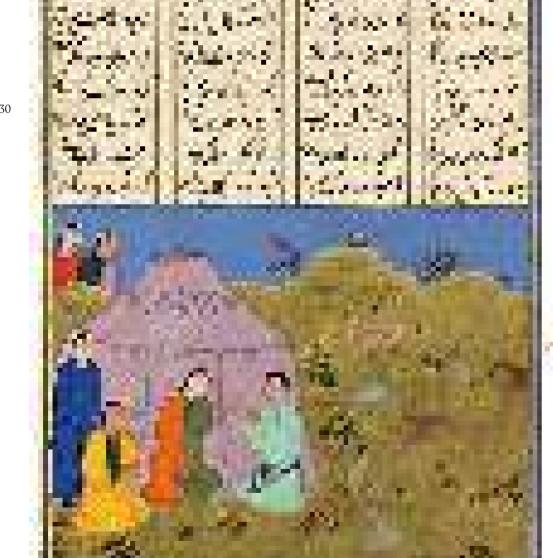
f. 42.
Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing in a spring.



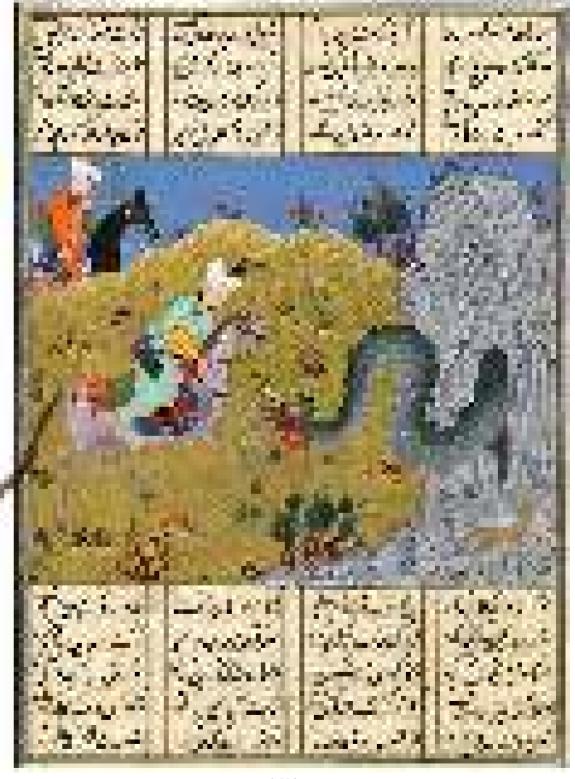
f. 112.
The battle of Leyli and Majnun's tribes.

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f. 137. Leyli and Majnun in a golden meadow by a tent.



f. 156. Bahram Gur slays the dragon.



The "Turkman Commercial Style", that was practised in Shiraz in the final third of the 15th century, disappeared immediately after Shiraz was taken over by Shah Ismayil in 1504. The fledgling new style, labelled 'Proto-Safavid', replaced it immediately, and totally, with Shiraz artists then attempting to change gear and adapt to the new.

Stocky puppets became exquisitely graceful figures, slim, elongated and moving easily in dream-like scenery. The dense, thick woods of the "Turkman Commercial Style" miniatures gave way to the vivid beauty of enchantingly lavish panoramas. The animals changed, too: the wooden horses of the old style gave way to graceful racers - tall, sinewy and long-legged.

Compositions became more sophisticated and complex; the primitive "Turkman Commercial Style" arrangements of figures were more skilfully elaborated. The single line-up replaced by diagonal, circular, triangular etc. groupings.

The coloration was still bright, but more delicately applied; crude combinations of colour gave way to subtle harmonies and shades of broader range.

The new 'Proto-Safavid' style heralded a renewal of miniature painting; this early example already represented the great art of the Safavid Tabriz miniature, which would go on to spread throughout the empire.

The 'Proto-Safavid' Shiraz-style *Khamsa* manuscripts in the Topkapı collection are H.791, H.788, H.783, and H.766.



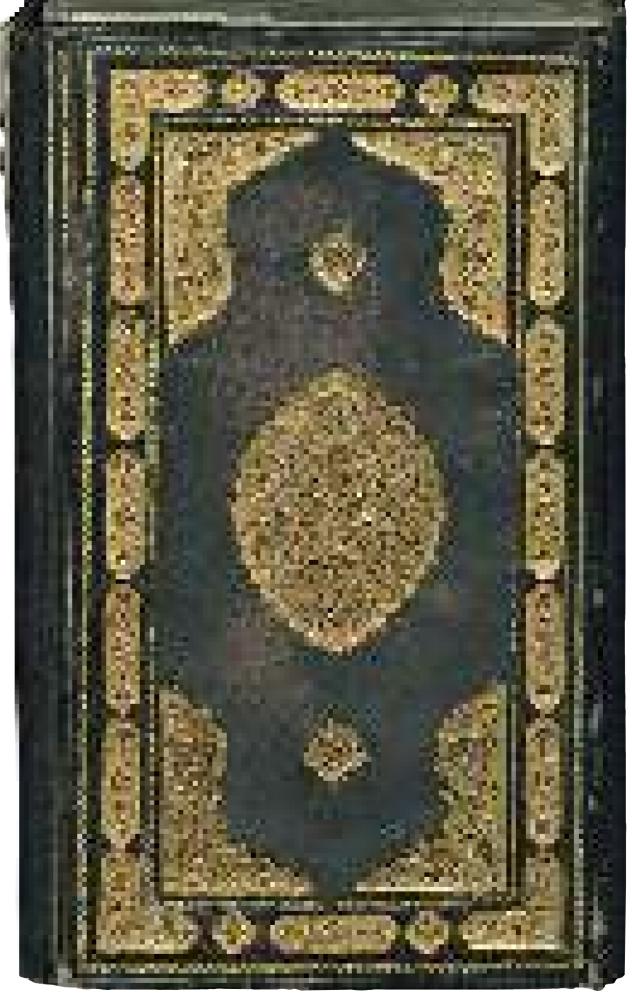






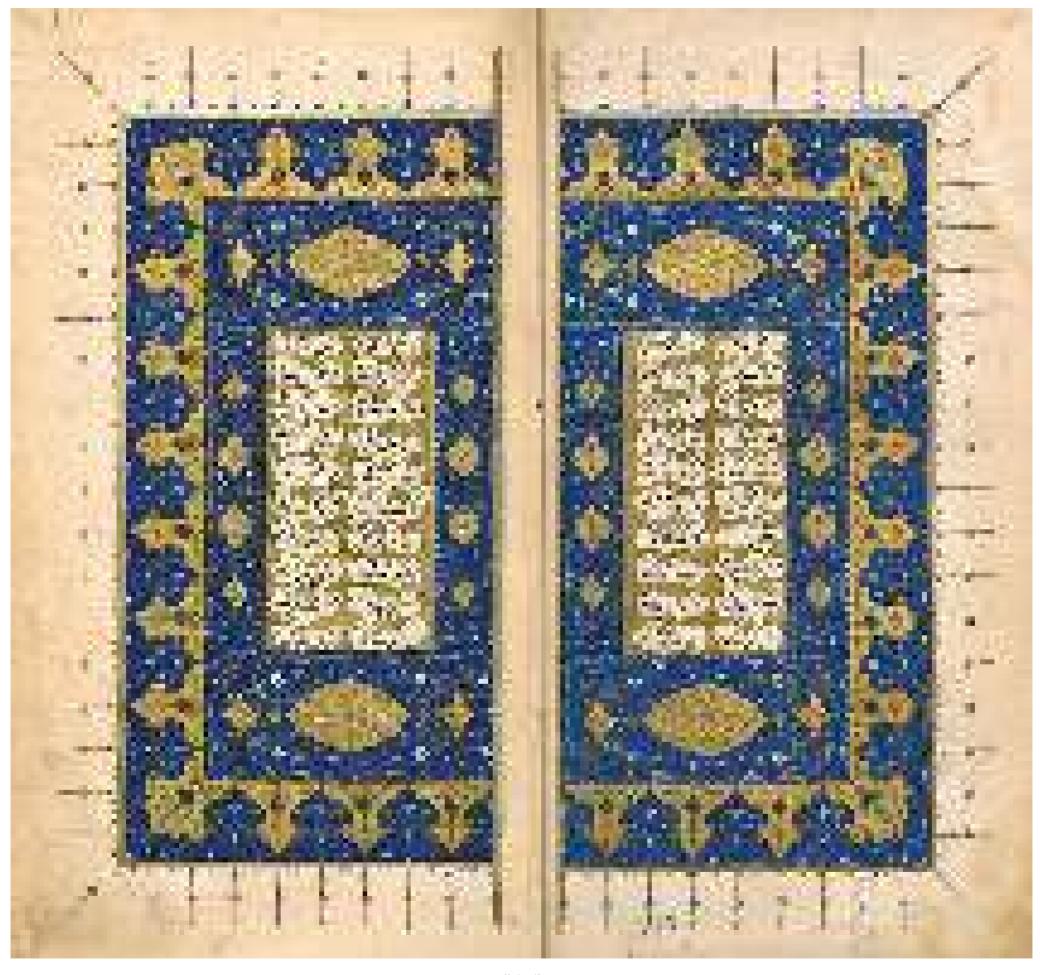
The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.791, created by calligrapher Hasan al-Katib al-Isfahani. Date AH 911/04 June 1505 – 23 May 1506 CE. Contains 32 miniatures.

The miniatures in this early 16th century manuscript belong to the period when turbans with batons (*Taj-e Haydari*) appeared. This new style differs vastly from the "Turkman Commercial Style" that preceded it in Fars, and we would categorise it as 'Proto-Safavid'. Notable in these miniatures are the tall and slender human figures, horses that appear vertically stretched, as their necks are incredibly curved, legs long and thin, and bodies bony. The miniatures display bright colours in both vivid and delicate tones.



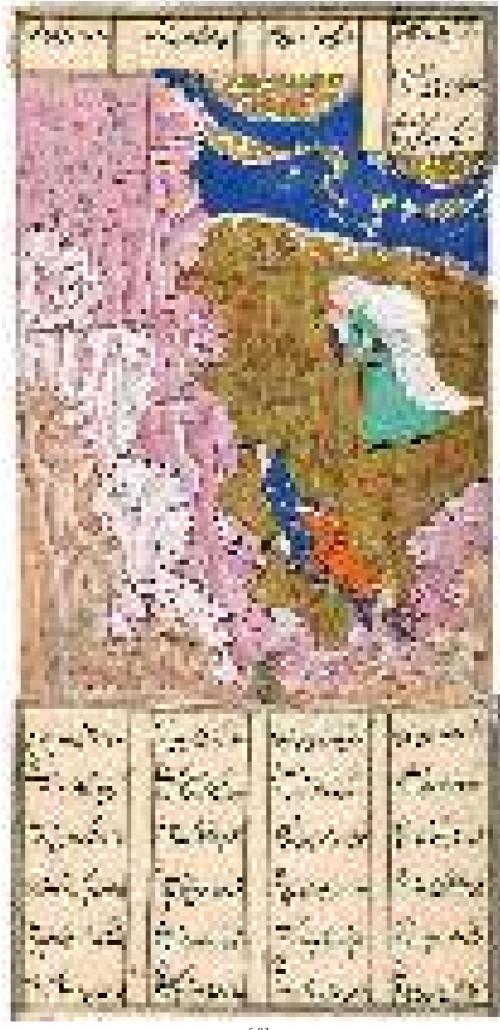
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ff. 5a-4b.
Exquisitely decorated pages of sarloukh.

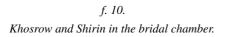


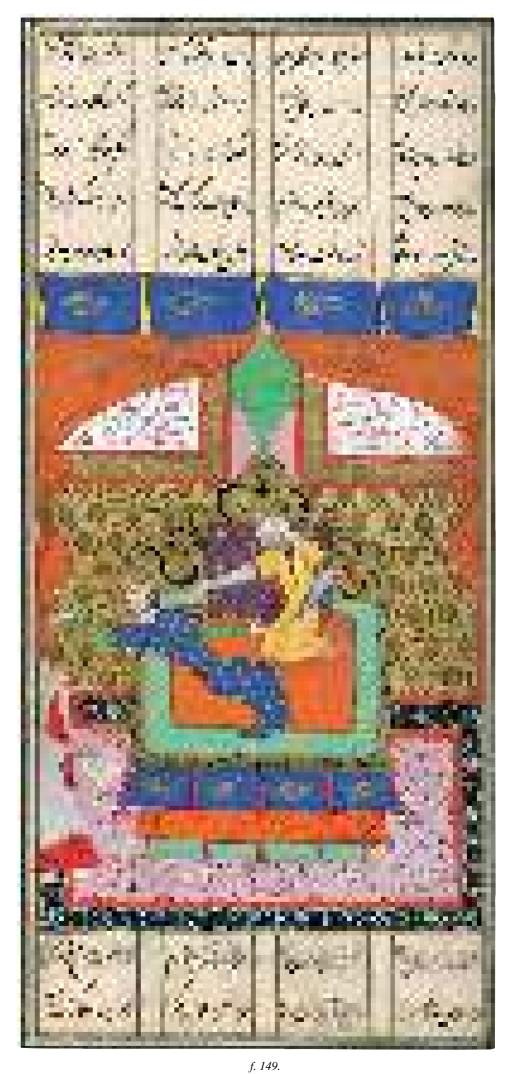


f. 83.
Farhad commits suicide.

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Leyli slaps ibn Salam in the face with such force that he falls unconscious to the floor.

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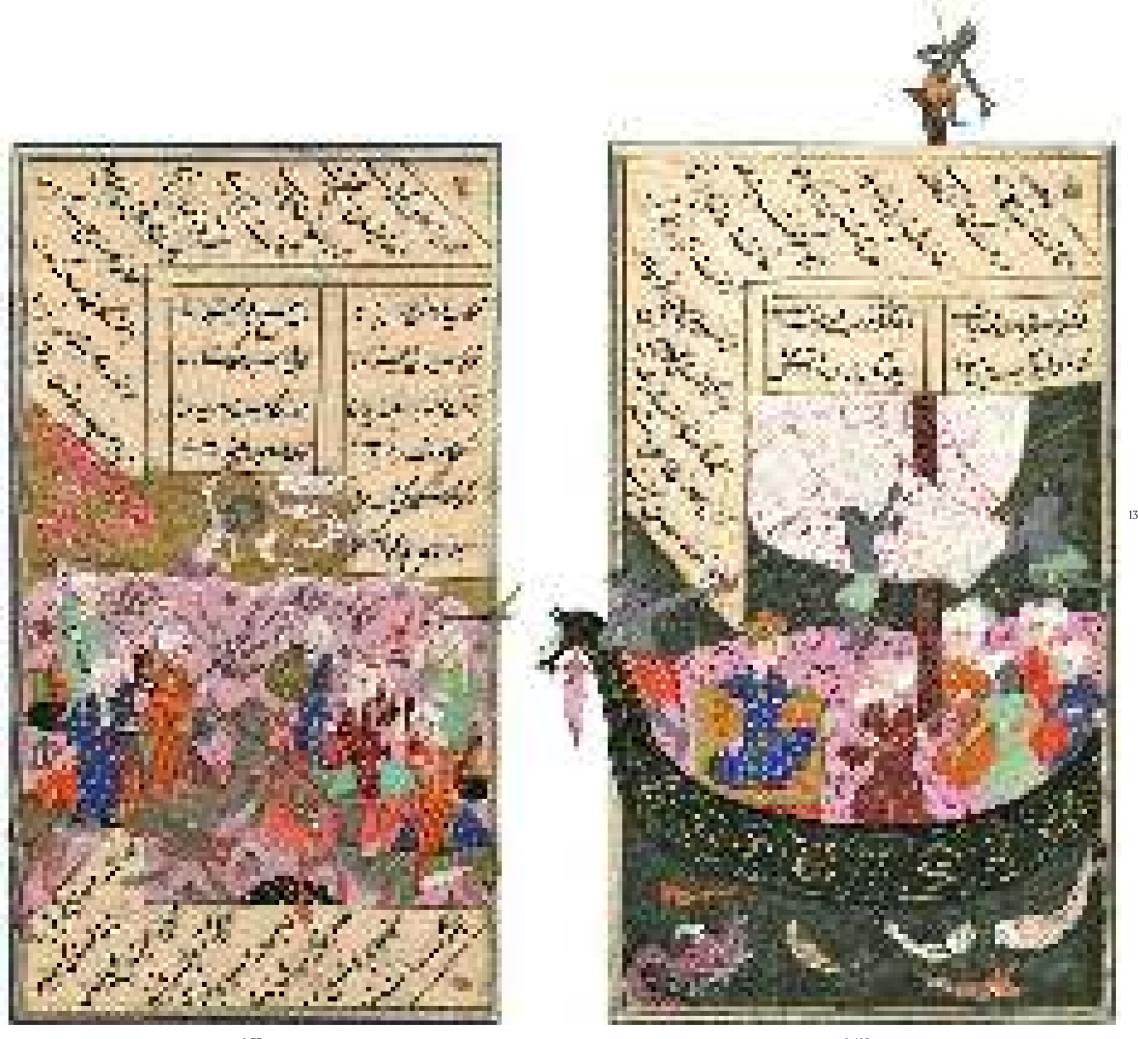
The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.788, created by Sheikh Muhammad Asil. Date AH 919/06 June – 05 July 1513 CE. Contains 12 miniatures. No other data available.

These miniatures are of good quality; they feature delicate drawing and fresh, bright patterning. They belong to the beginnings of 'Proto-Safavid' Shiraz style in which once stocky human figures begin to stretch.



f. 63b. Shirin looks at Khosrow's portrait on the tree.





f. 77.

Majnun watches the battle of tribes.

f. 408. Iskandar's sea voyage.



f. 319.

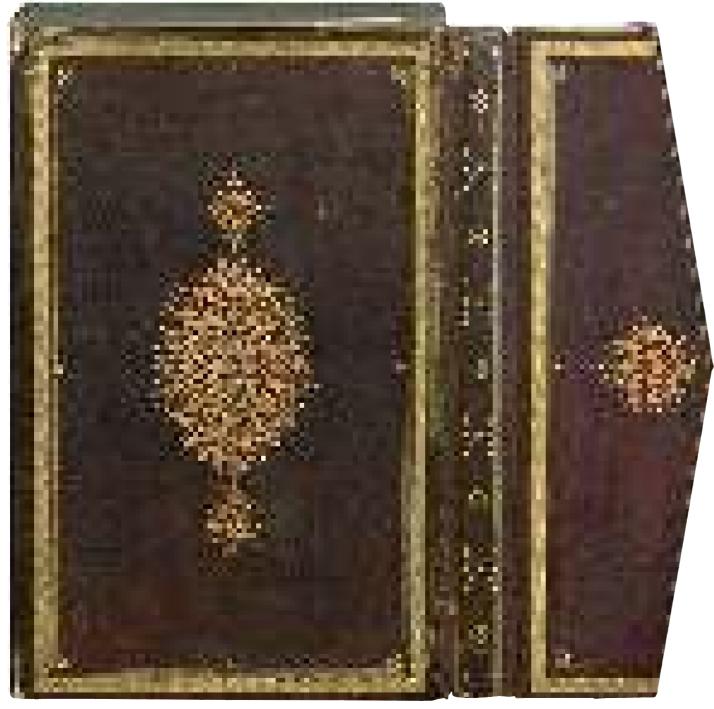
Iskandar sits under the Magic Tree "Vaq-Vaq".

("Vaq-Vaq" is a mythical tree that has leaves during the day and the heads of people and animals at night.)



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Back cover with flap, outer.

The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.783 was created in AH 919/1513–1514 CE by the calligrapher Mun'im al-Din Muhammad al-Auhadi al-Hosayni. It is illustrated with 22 miniatures.

These miniatures are apparently from a single artist; they are of high quality, painted in the new 'Proto-Safavid' style in Shiraz early in the 16th century. Turbans with batons (*Taj-e Haydari*) are still missing on most pictures. They are sometimes subtly hinted at.

ff. 5a-6b.

Exquisitely decorated pages of sarloukh.





f. 24.

Jesus and the dead dog.



f. 205. Fitnah watches Bahram hunting a gazelle.

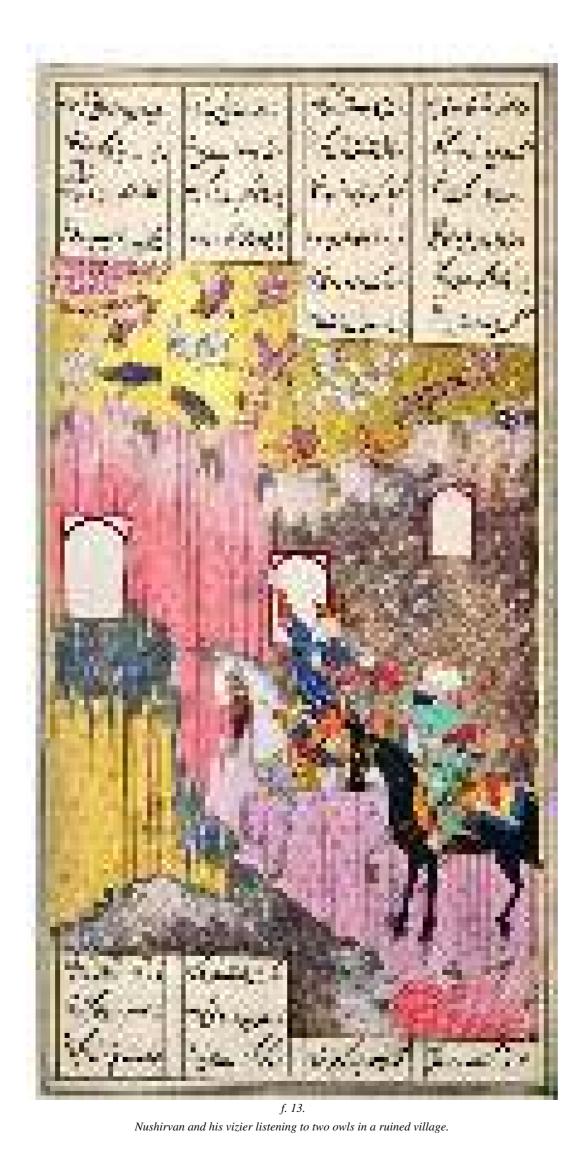


f. 335. Iskandar lassos the Rus's Div (ogre).



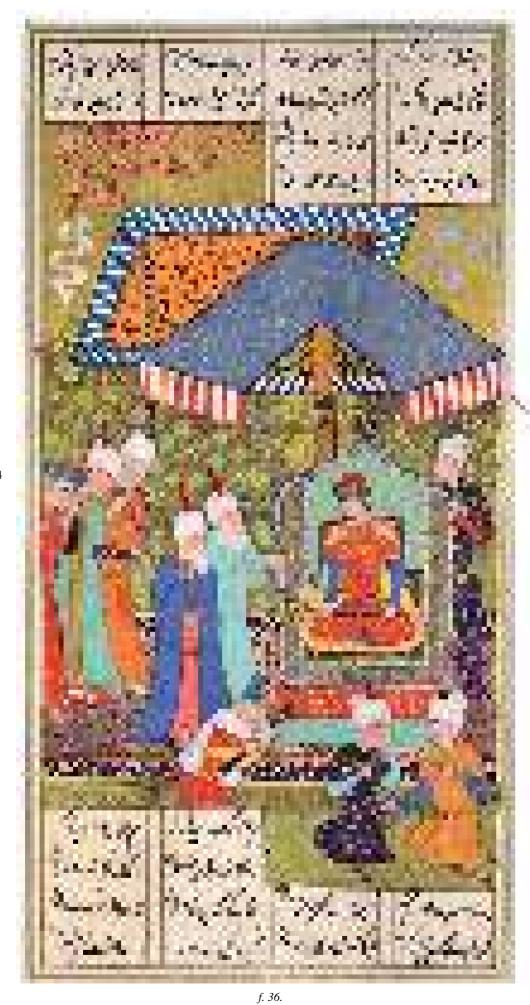




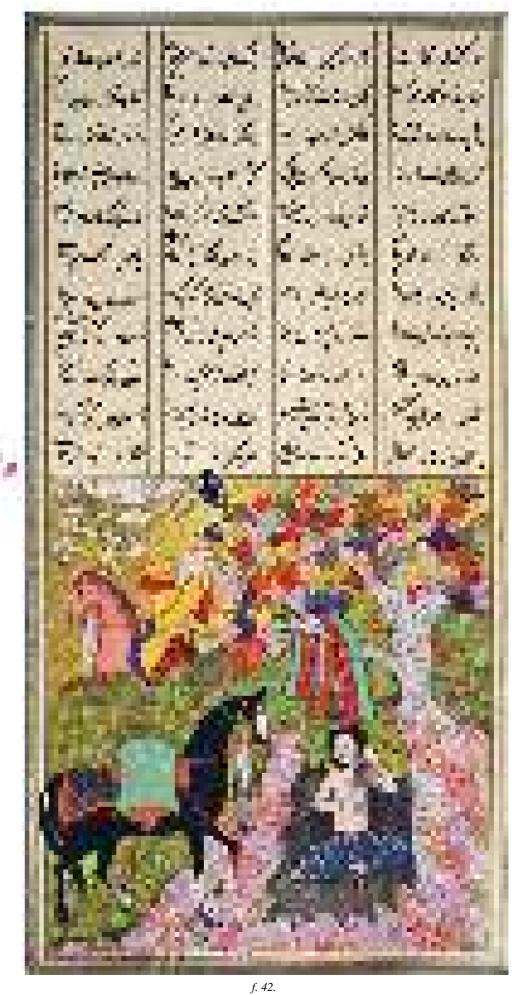


The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.766 was completed in AH 922/31 July – 30 August 1516 CE by the calligrapher Haji al-Katib. Like manuscript H.783, it is illustrated with 28 miniatures in the 'Proto-Safavid' Shiraz style.

The miniatures in this manuscript belong to the 16^{th} century Shiraz school and, judging by the difference in styles, were created by three artists.



The Elders pleading before Hurmuzd on behalf of the young Khosrow.



Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing in the spring.





f. 48.

Khosrow and Shirin meet on the hunting ground.

They are escorted by courtiers.



f. 59. An envoy informs Khosrow of Bahram Chubineh's death. (Rare illustration)

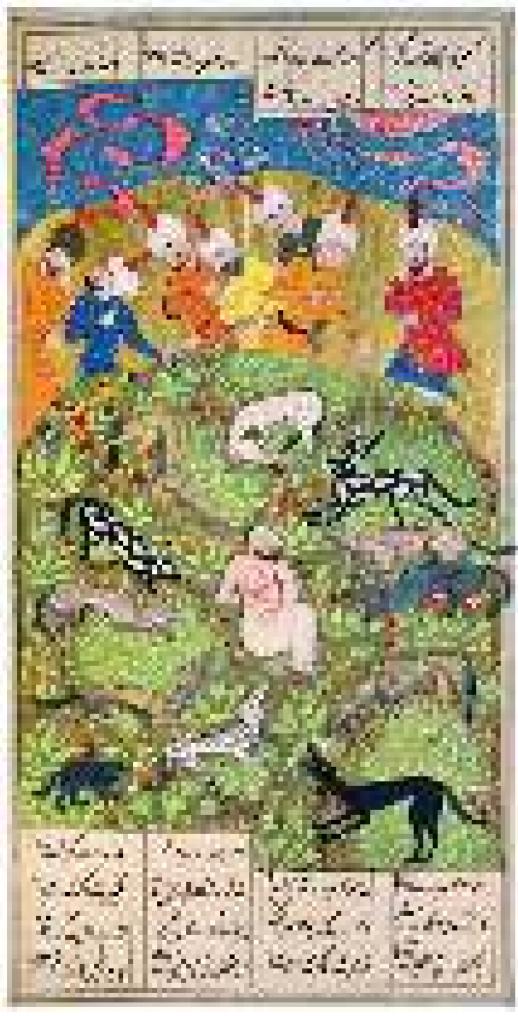
The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces



f. 69.
Shirin visits Farhad on Mount Bisitun.



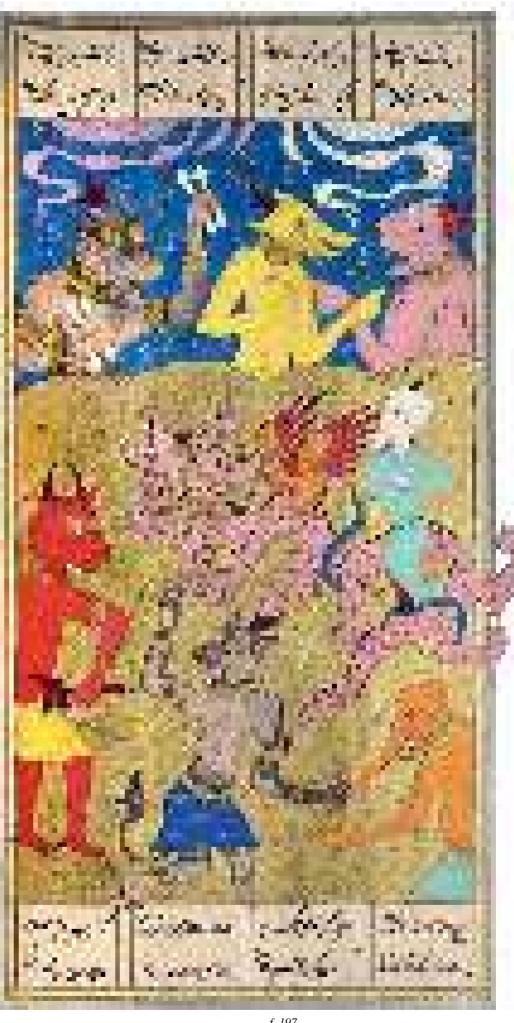




f. 134.

A servant of the King of Merv is thrown to angry dogs.

A group of seven people (wearing Taj-e Haydari-type turbans with batons) watches this scene in surprise.



f. 197. Mahan on a dragon's back among divs.

01-163 NIZAMI chapter-8-a ing.indd 147

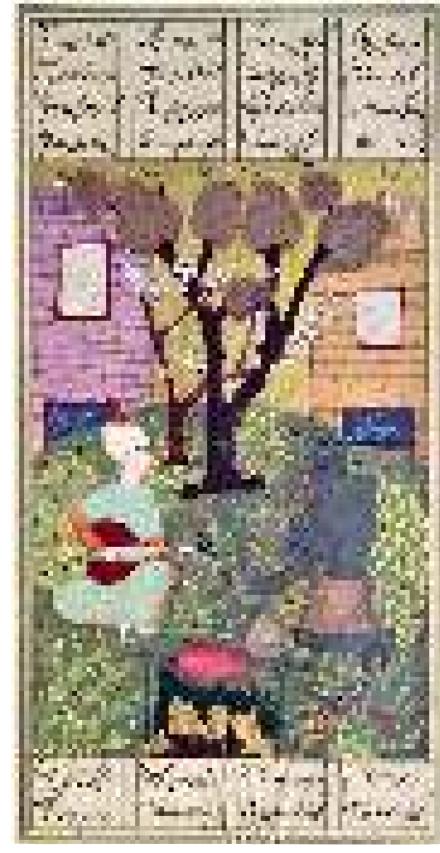
The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces



The master of the garden peeks at girls bathing.

Bahram Gur and the shepherd who hanged his dog.





f. 305.

The Story of a baker and two black men. A young man sits under a tree and plays the chang, while a black man listens.

(Rare illustration)



The death of Iskandar.

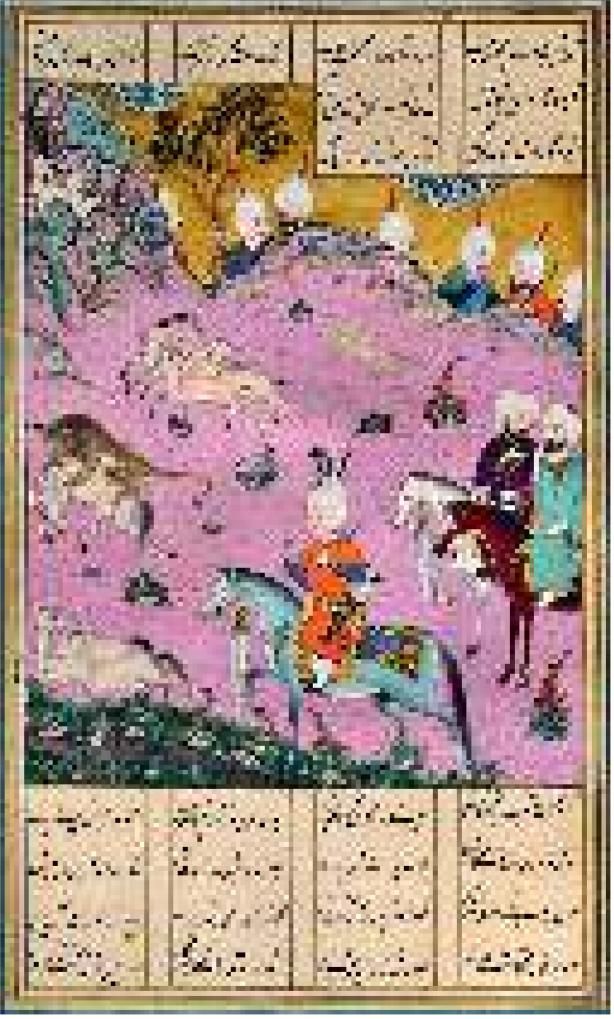
01-163 NIZAMI chapter-8-a ing.indd 149

Although coinciding with the flourishing of fine arts in Herat in the last quarter of the 15th century, Behzad's works are, unfortunately, not represented by Nizami *Khamsa* manuscripts in the Topkapı collection.

The Topkapı Museum has only one copy of a *Khamsa* with miniatures from 16th century Tabriz: manuscript R.882. Although not comparable with its London counterpart, this work of undoubted interest as a bright example of works created by the best students of Sultan Muhammad.

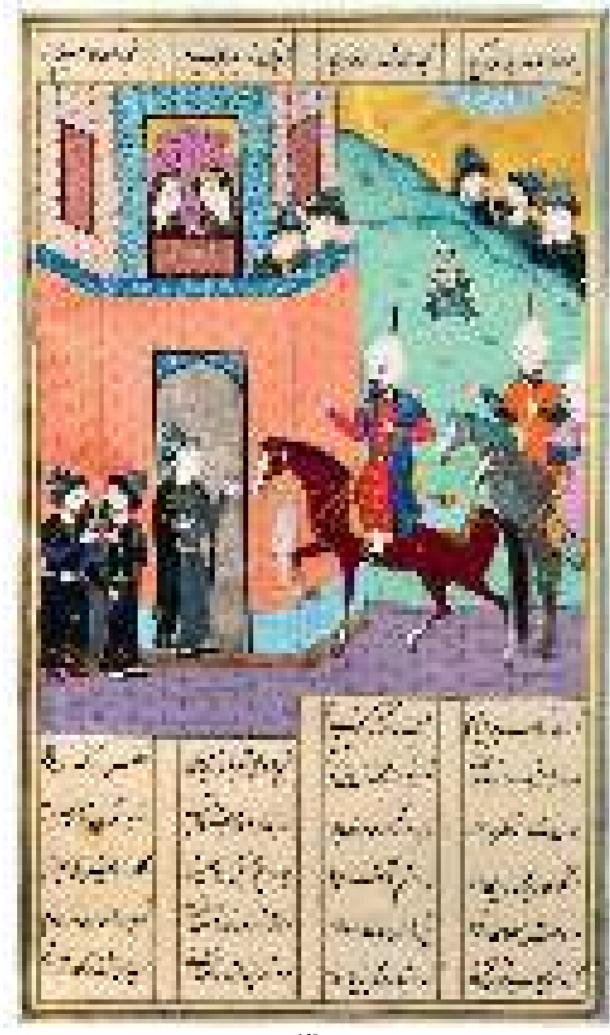
The *Khamsa* Manuscript R.882 contains the poem *Haft Paykar* (The Seven Beauties). It was copied by the calligrapher Imad bin Mohammed al-Harawi and contains 10 miniatures.

These miniatures represent the bounteous days of the Tabriz school under Shah Tahmasp I; the numerous *Taj-e Haydari* turbans suggest that its works were complete by 1530–1535. They were seemingly created by a single artist, and are distinguished by their excellent execution.

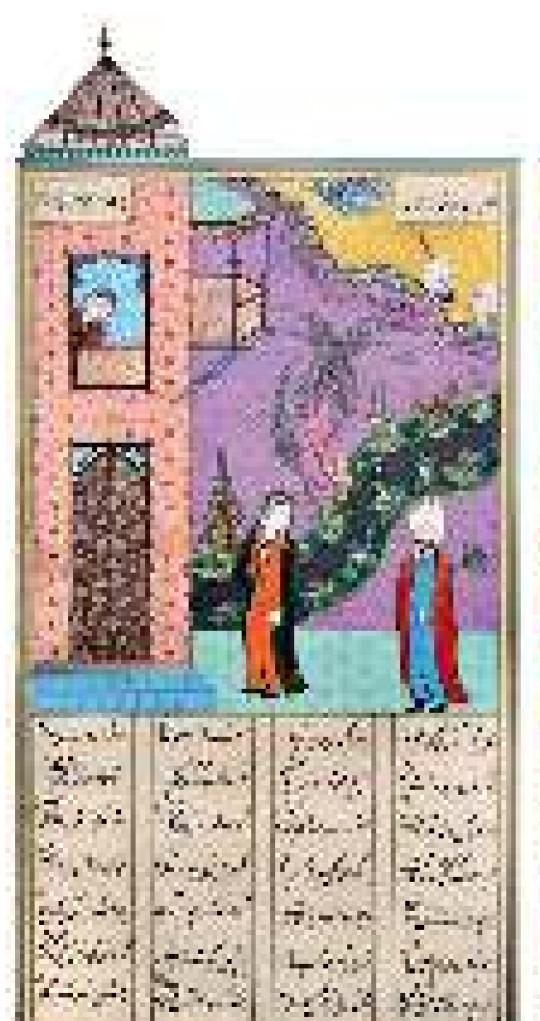


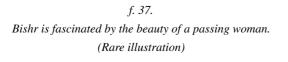
f. 12.
Bahram pierces a lion and an onager with one arrow.





f. 28.
A traveller in the town of people dressed in black.
(Rare illustration)

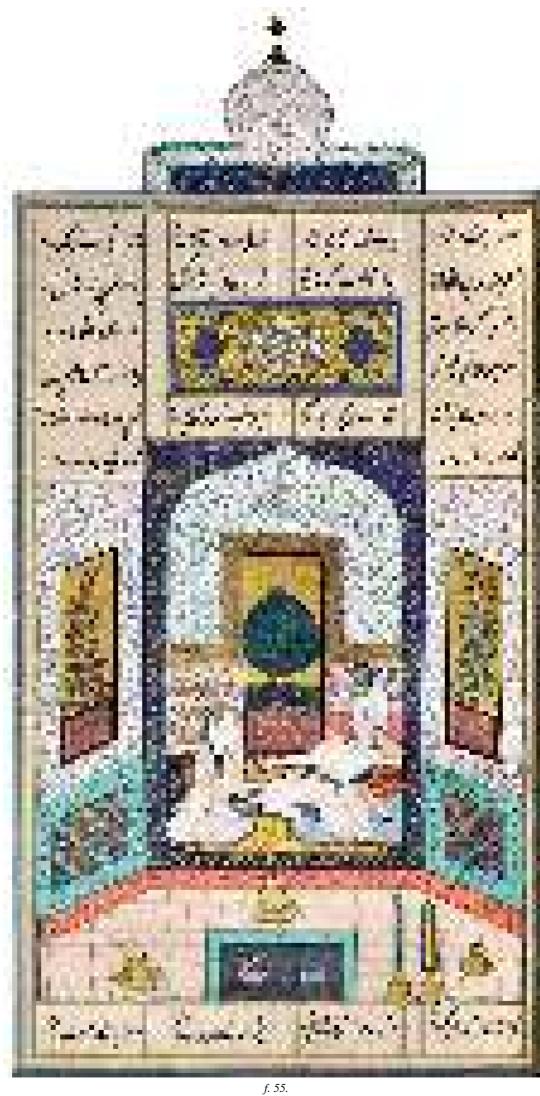






Bahram Gur in the Sandalwood Dome.





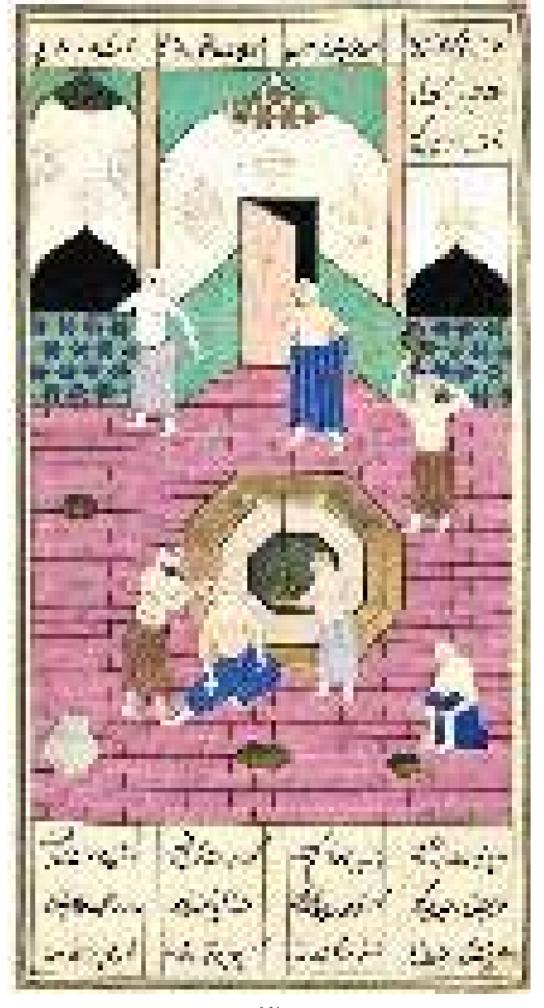
f. 55.

Bahram Gur in the White Dome.

Having reviewed the Tabriz school, we turn to the ancient traditions of Shiraz. An important centre of arts in the 16th century, this capital of Fars province left other schools far behind for the quantity of illustrated manuscripts it produced. The many illustrated copies of Nizami's *Khamsa* held in Topkapı Palace allow us to trace the evolution of the Shiraz art style from early Safavid rule (16th century) to the reign of Shah Abbas.

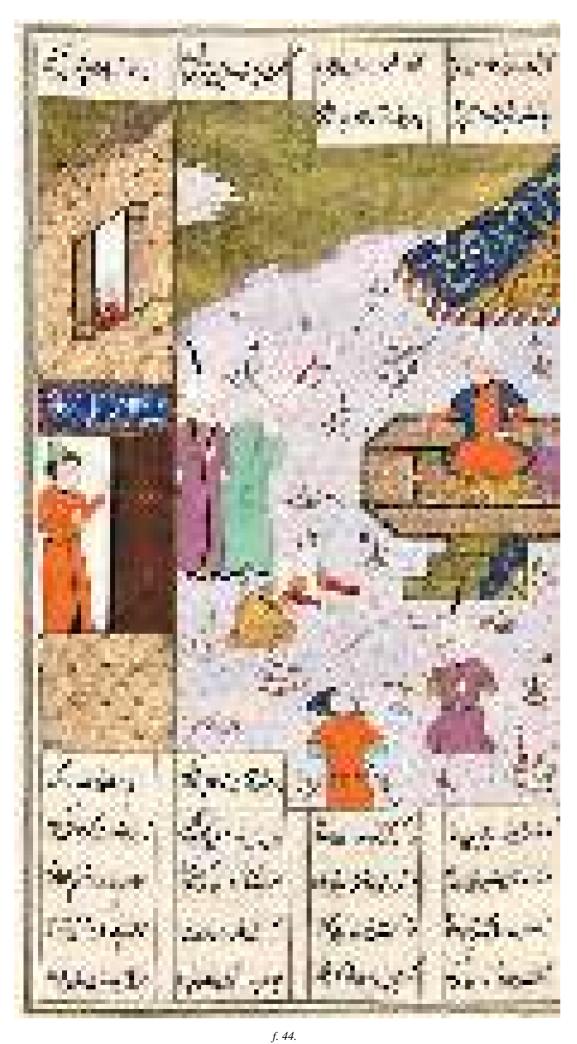
The *Khamsa* Manuscript R.860, created by Murshid Katib Attar. Completed in AH 927/12 December 1520 – 30 November 1521 CE. The place of origin is not indicated. Contains 36 miniatures.

The miniatures in this manuscript do not represent the 'Proto-Safavid' Shiraz style; although they retain individual features, they show a strong influence from the Tabriz school. This style was predominant in Shiraz until the end of the 16th century.

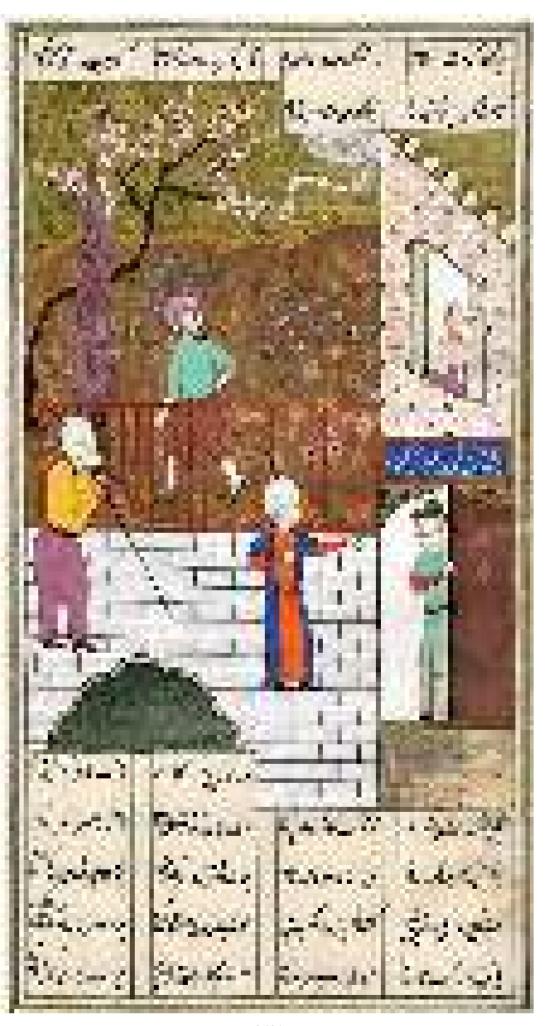


f. 34. Caliph Harun al-Rashid and the barber.



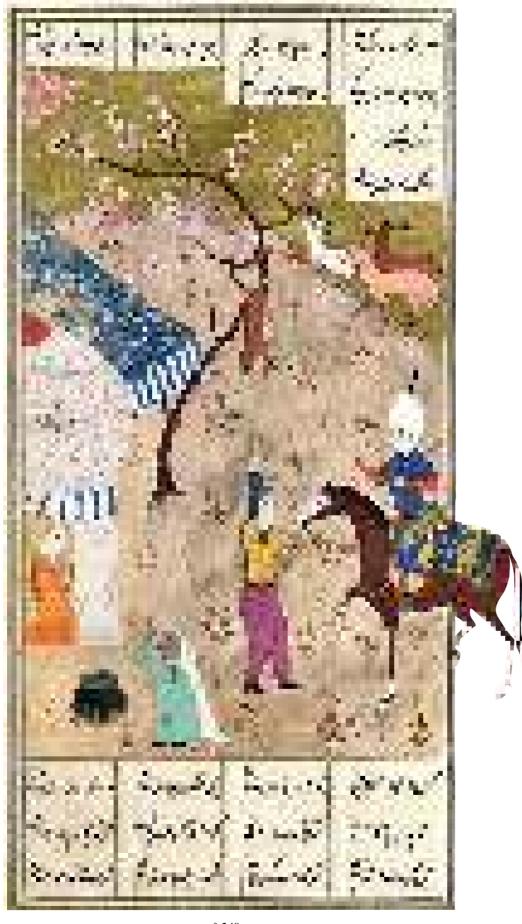


The Elders plead before Hurmuzd on behalf of the young Khosrow.



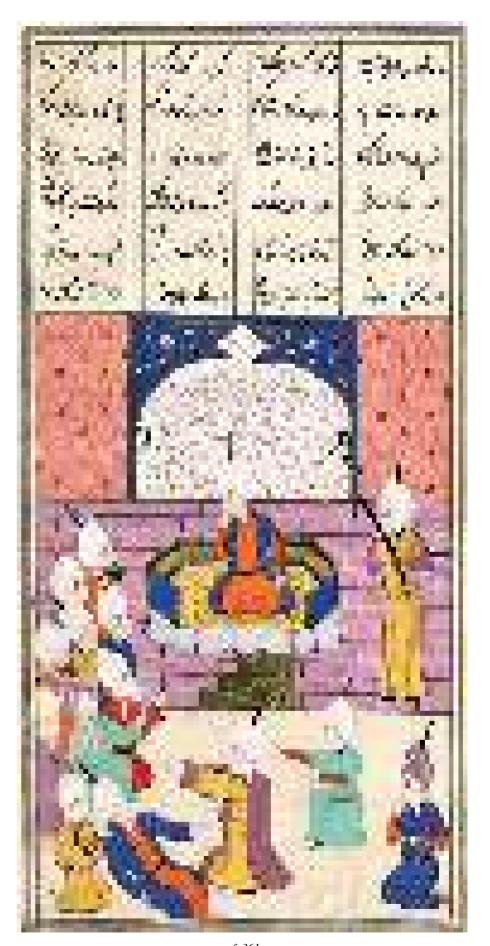
f. 194. Numan, king of Yemen, converses with his son Munzir. (Rare illustration)





f. 248.

Bahram sees the dog hanged from a tree by the shepherd.

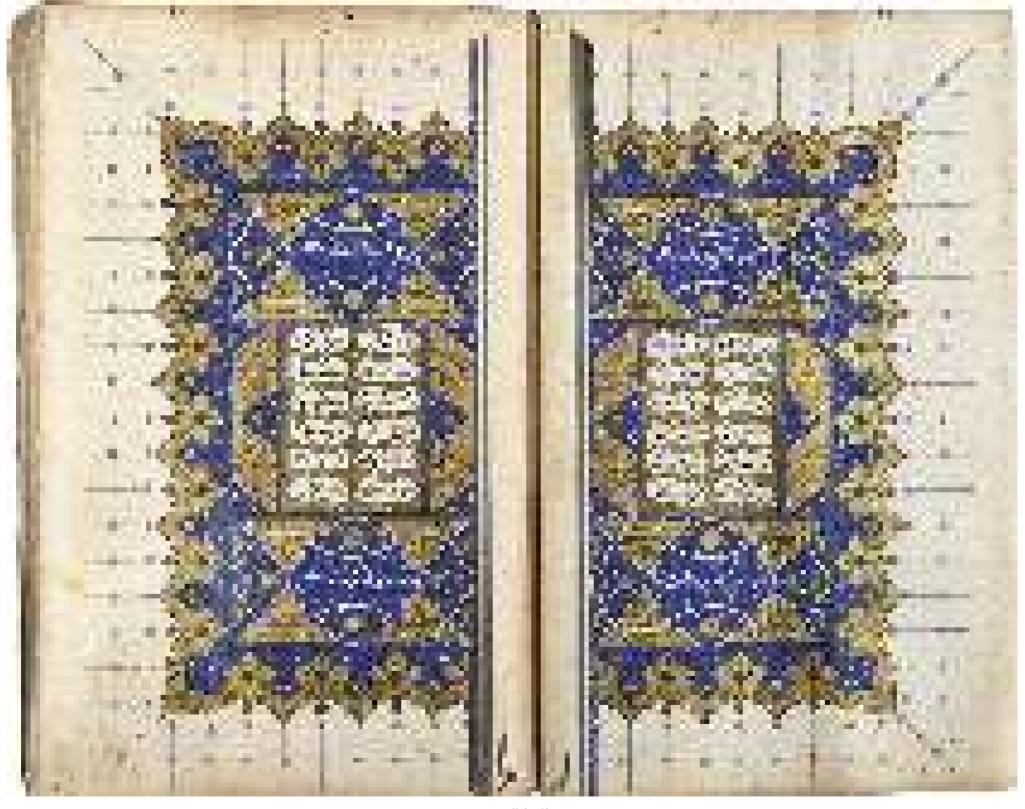


f. 361. Iskandar listens to a conversation between Plato and Aristotle.





The *Khamsa* Manuscript R.865, completed in AH 935/10 February –10 March 1529 CE. The calligrapher's name and place of origin are not indicated. There are 22 miniatures, all of them apparently representative of the Shiraz style of the 1530s. The illustrations are of good quality.

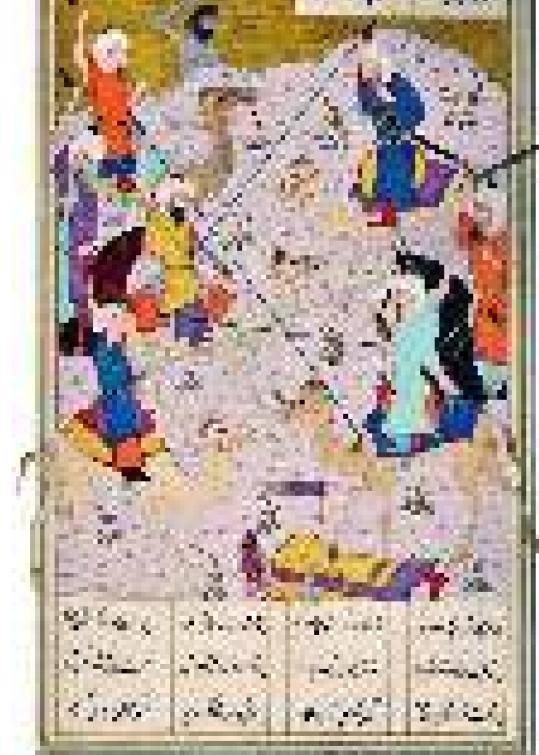


ff. 2a-1b.
Exquisitely decorated pages of sarloukh.





01-163 NIZAMI chapter-8-a ing.indd 158



f. 140.

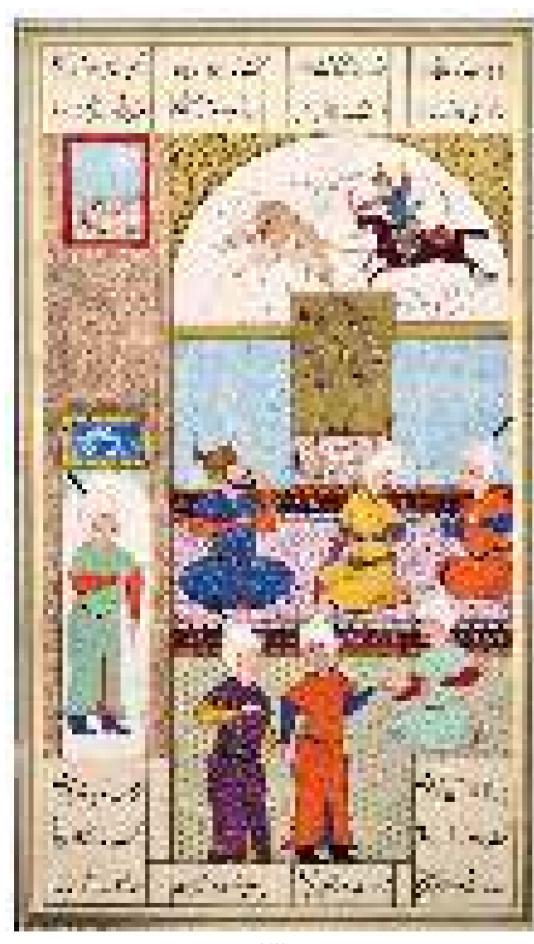
Majnun watches the battle of camel-riding tribes.



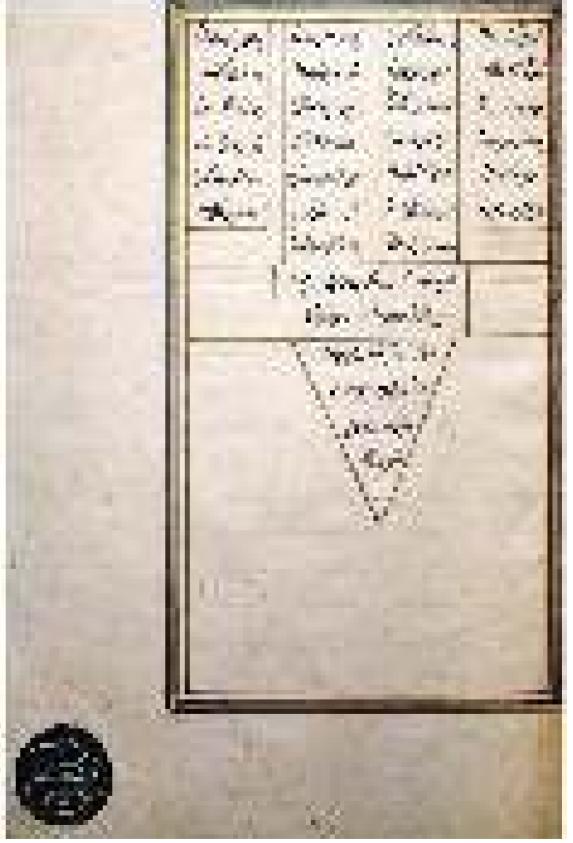
f. 151.

Majnun in the desert among animals.





f. 190. Munzir in Khawarnaq admires a wall painting that depicts Bahram Gur hunting. (Rare illustration)



Colophon with seal.

01-163 NIZAMI chapter-8-a ing.indd 159 6.01.2022 16:05

The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.760, created by Murshid al-Katib al-Shirazi. Completed in AH 941/November – December 1534 CE. Contains 30 miniatures.

The miniatures in this manuscript are typical of the Shiraz school of the 1540s. They are of good quality. Influenced by the royal academic school in Tabriz, the Shiraz school adopted a more realistic portrayal of the human anatomy and began to develop the art of composition and sophistication in harmony of colour. In other words, the style became increasingly scientific.



f. 15.

Nushirvan and his vizier listening to two owls in a ruined village.





ff. 2a-1b.

Exquisitely decorated pages of sarloukh.

01-163 NIZAMI chapter-8-a ing.indd 161 6.01.2022 16:05

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f. 32. Caliph Harun al-Rashid and the barber.





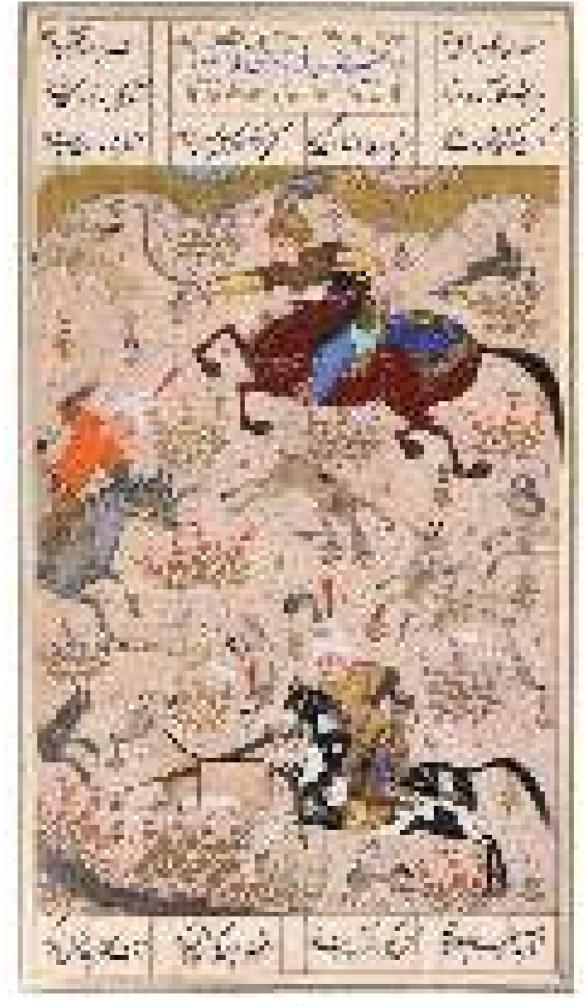
f. 45.
Shirin sees Khosrow's portrait hanging on a tree.

Working through the 15th century, the "Turkman Commercial Style", followed by early Safavid patterning ('Proto-Safavid' style), the Shiraz school embarked on a new formal direction. It submitted to the influence of the Tabriz school which, supported by the royal patrons Shah Ismayil and Shah Tahmasp, gained hitherto unseen success. Shiraz manuscripts of the 1550s reveal the substitution of early Safavid trends with new and more structurally developed compositions and colouristically enriched miniatures.

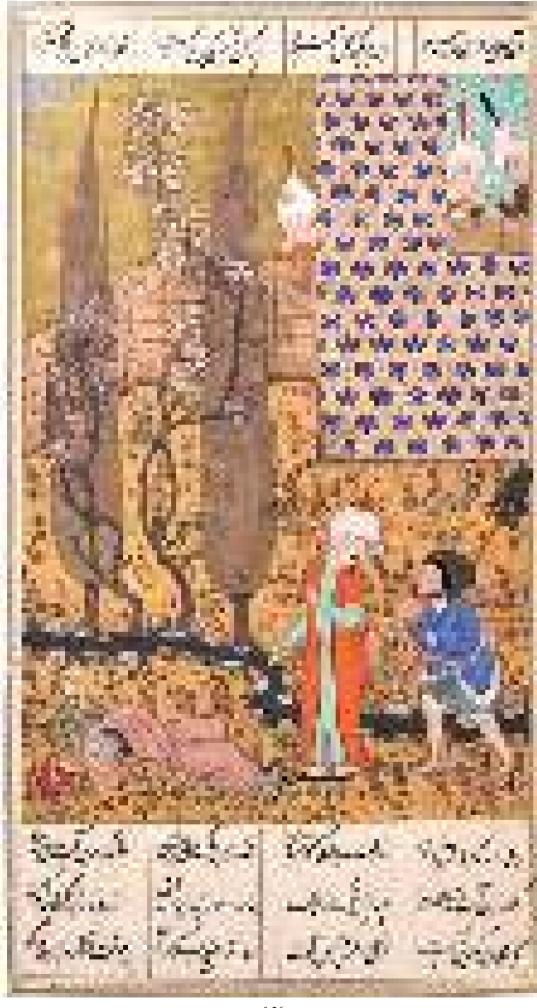
The ever-increasing influence of the Tabriz school can be traced in manuscripts: H.758, H.755, H.756; R.867; R.870; R.879.

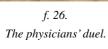
The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.758, completed by the calligrapher Murshid al-Katib al-Shirazi in AH 945/1538 CE. Contains 25 miniatures.

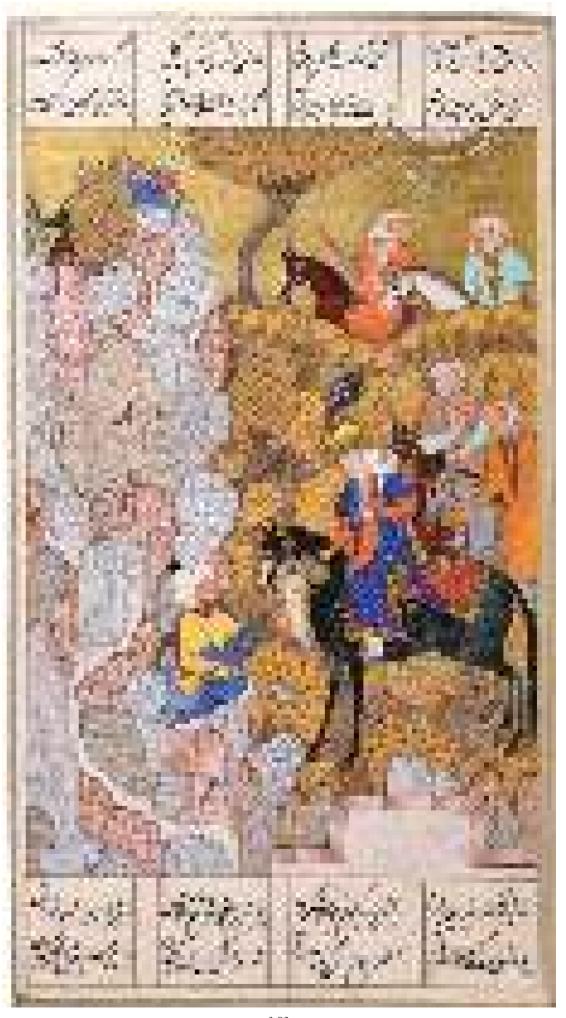
These miniatures are typical of the Shiraz school in the 1530s - 40s. Some elements of the late 15th century "Turkman Commercial Style" persist, rendering the pictures somewhat naïve and cute. In general, however, the miniatures are of a good level.



f. 20. Faridun hunts a gazelle.

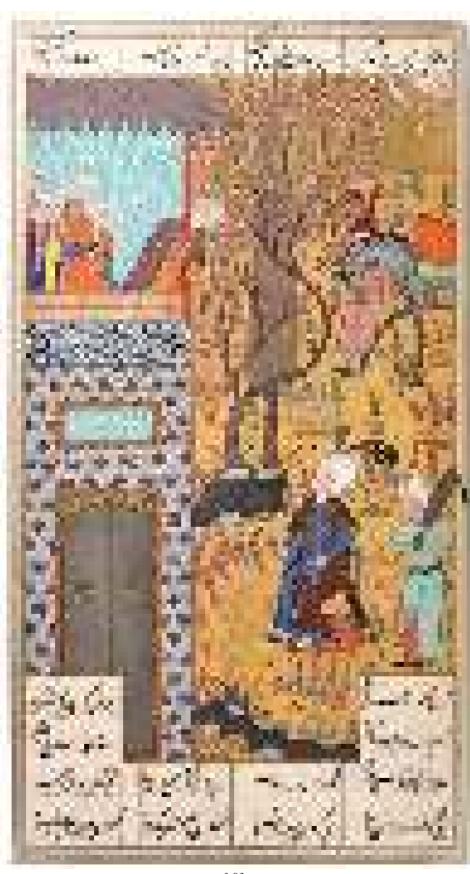




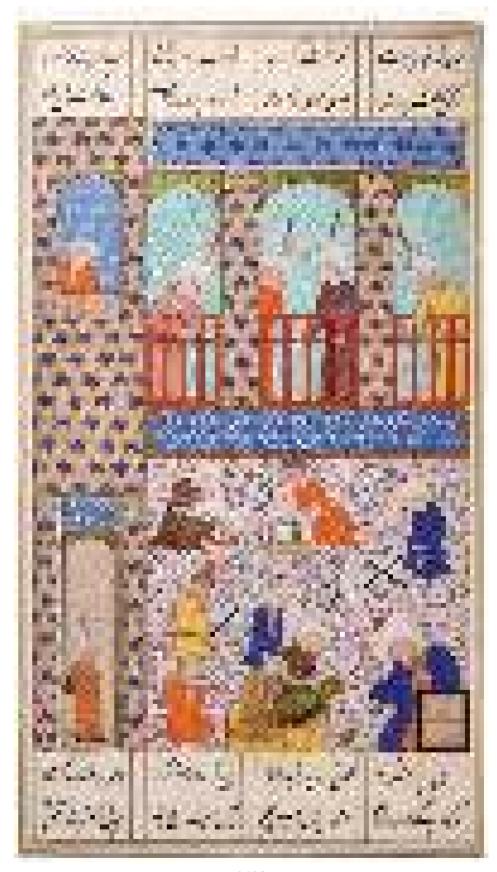


f. 83. Shirin visits Farhad at Mount Bisitun.

164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 165

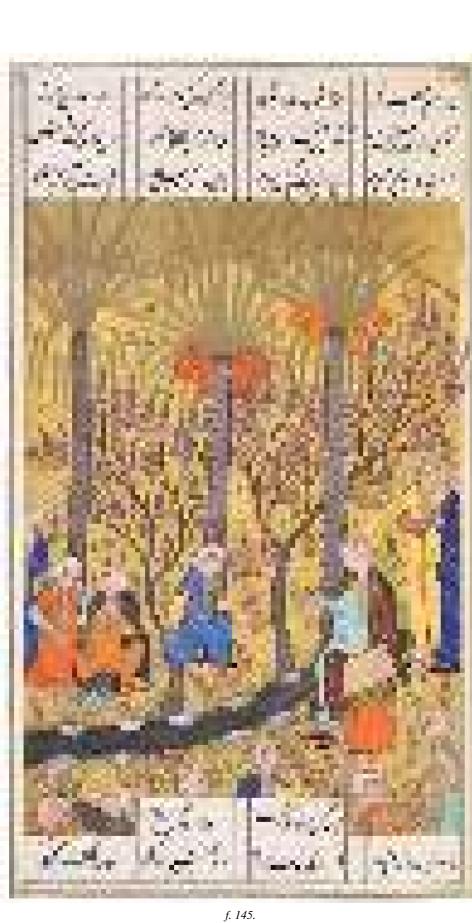


f. 93. Khosrow sits before Shirin's castle.

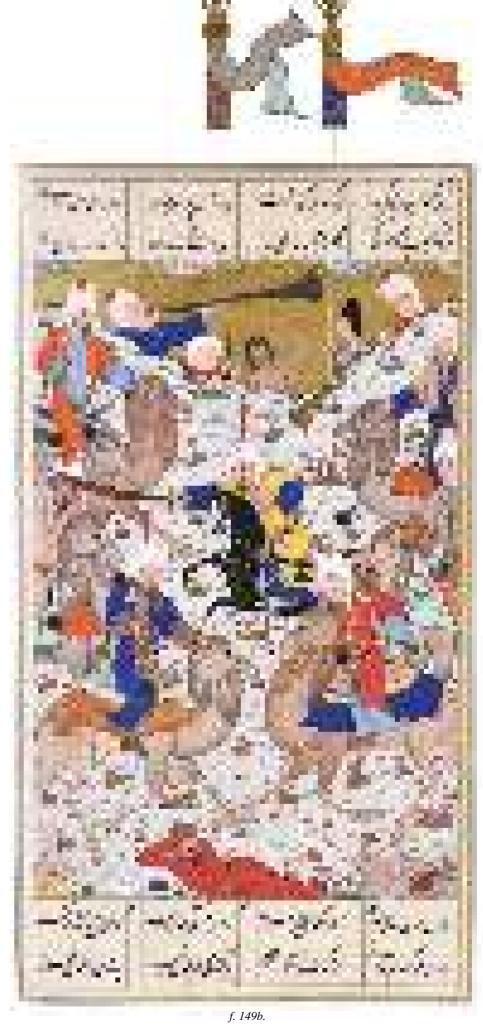


f. 136. Leyli and Majnun at school.



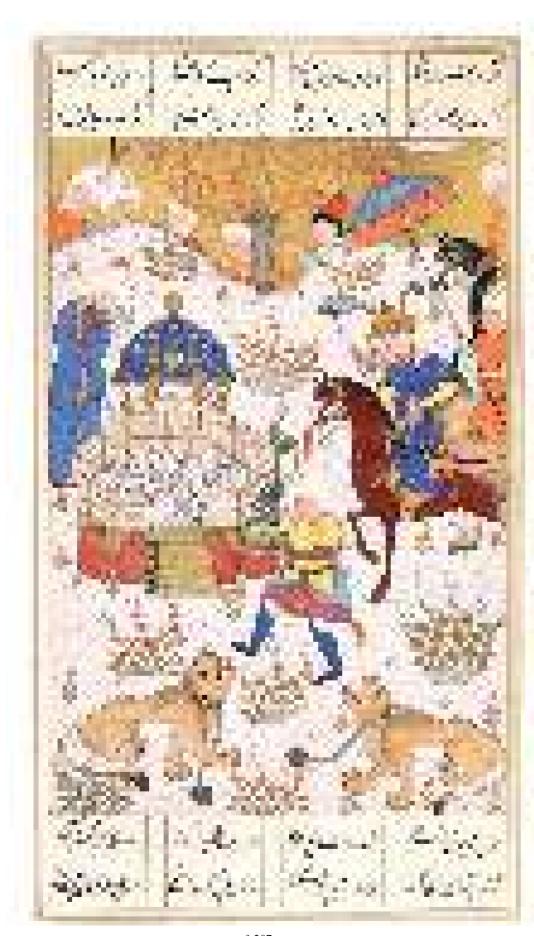


f. 145.
Leyli is visited by two women.



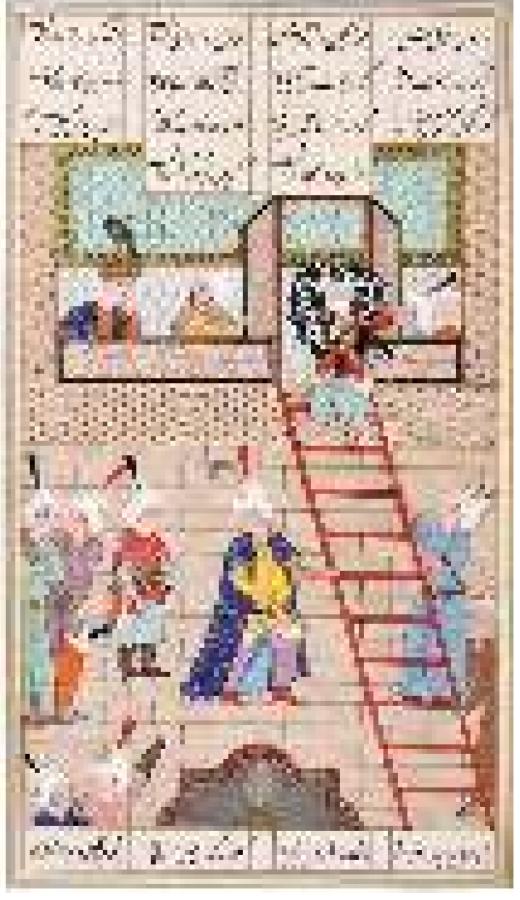
Majnun watches the battle of camel-riding tribes.

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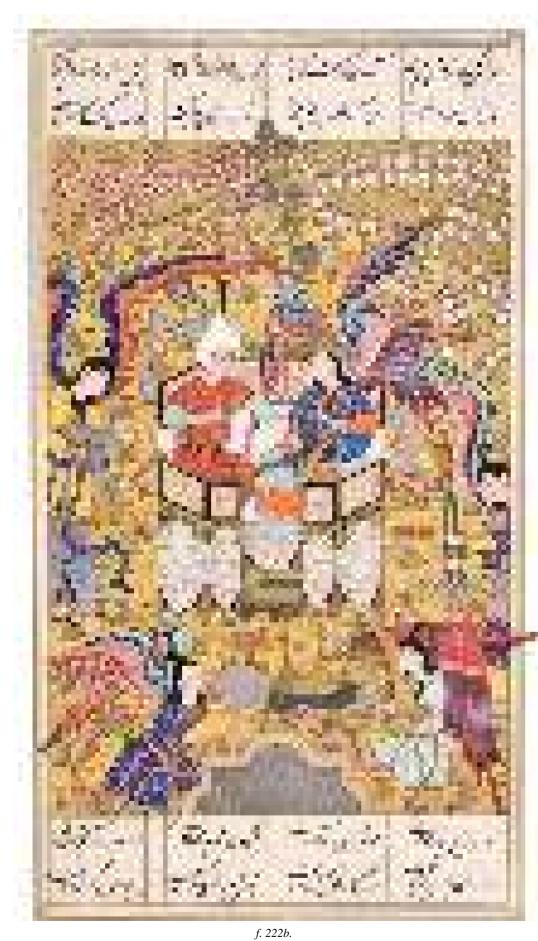


f. 207.

Bahram Gur slays two lions and gains the crown.



f. 211. Fitnah carries the bull on her shoulders before Bahram Gur.

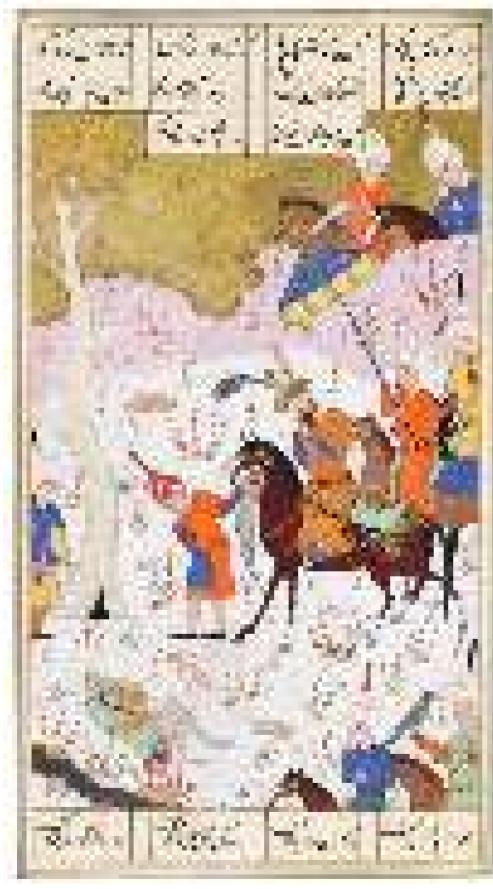


The traveller and the Fairy Queen.



f. 236. Mahan riding a dragon.

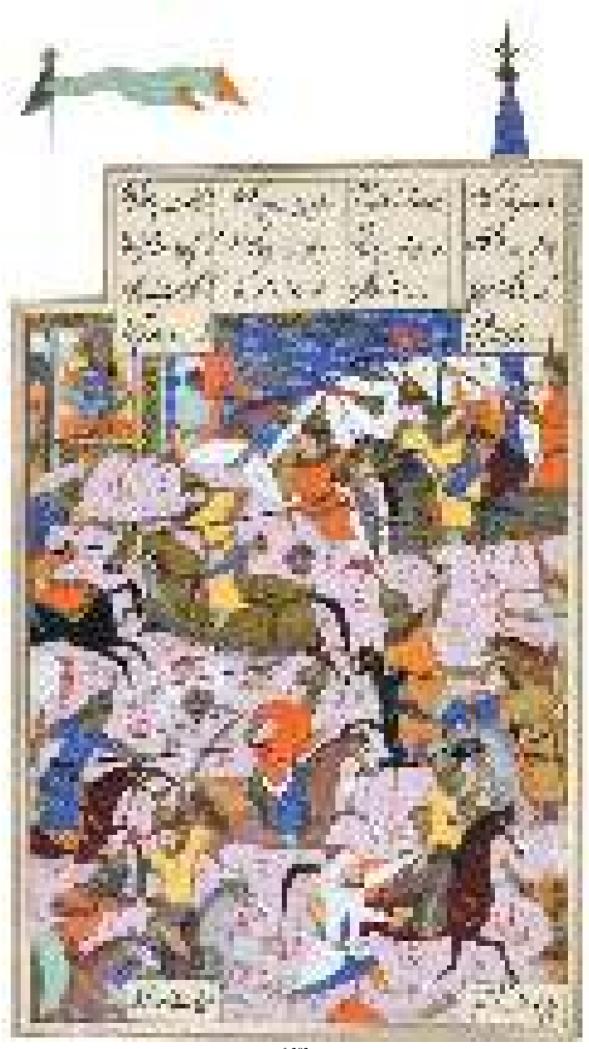
164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 169 6.01.2022 16:06



f. 271.

Riding a horse, King Filicus (Philip) stops by a dead woman and her surviving baby lying on the plain.

Adopted by the King of Macedon, the child grows up to be Iskandar.



f. 282.

Iskandar's battle with the army of Darius.





f. 299. Iskandar executes Darius's assassins.



Iskandar hunting with the Chinese Khagan.

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f. 365b.

Iskandar before Hermes, who turned inattentive listeners to stone. Riding a horse, Iskandar arrives to see the miracle of Hermes who became angry at his disciples' lack of attention.

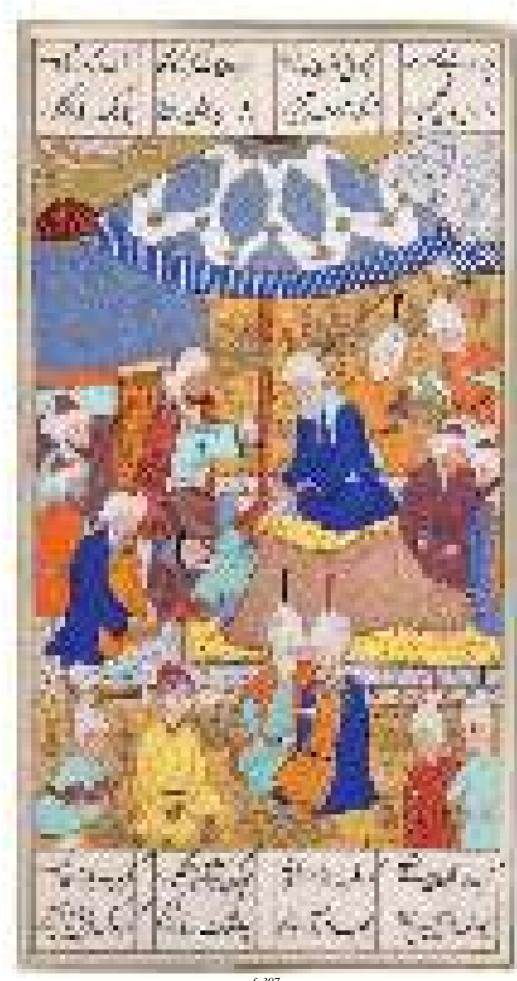
They lie on the ground around him.



f. 383.

Iskandar stops to admire the magnificent mausoleum of King Shaddad in the garden of Iram.

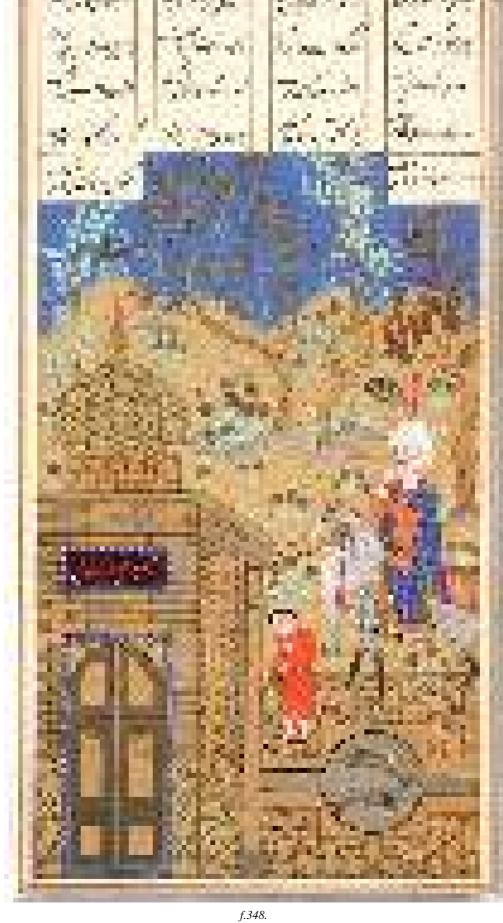




f. 397. The death of Iskandar.

1/3





The Khamsa Manuscript H.755, completed in AH 947/01 November – 01 December 1540 CE.

There is no other information. Contains 25 Shiraz-style miniatures. The miniatures are indicative of the Shiraz school (1530–1540s).

 ${\it Is kandar\ admires\ the\ magnificent\ mausoleum\ of\ King\ Shaddad\ in\ the\ garden\ of\ Iram.}$

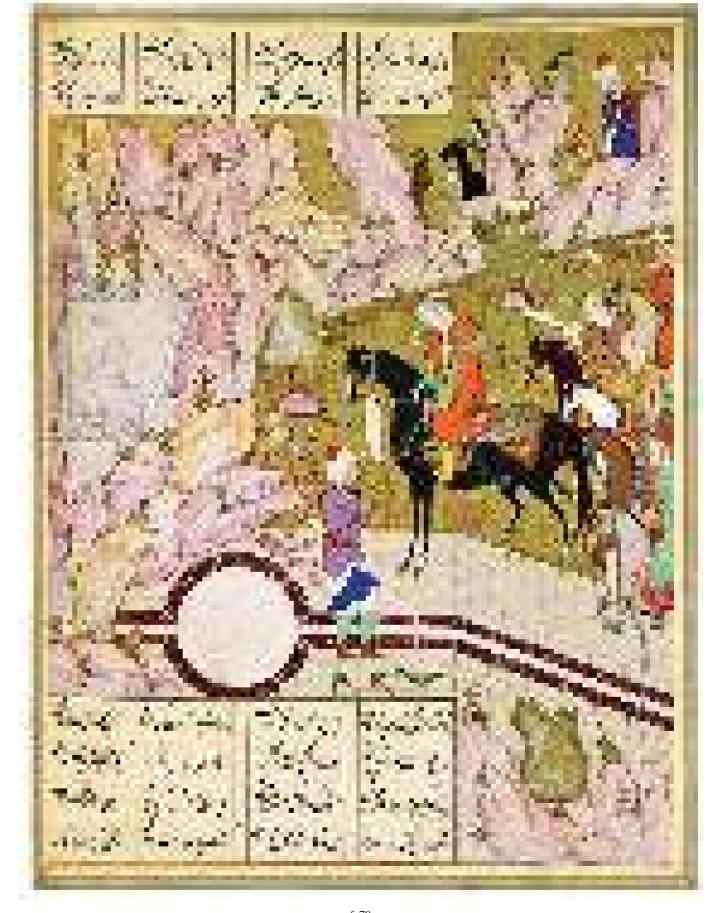




ff. 2a-1b.

Exquisitely decorated double sarloukh.

puble sarloukh.

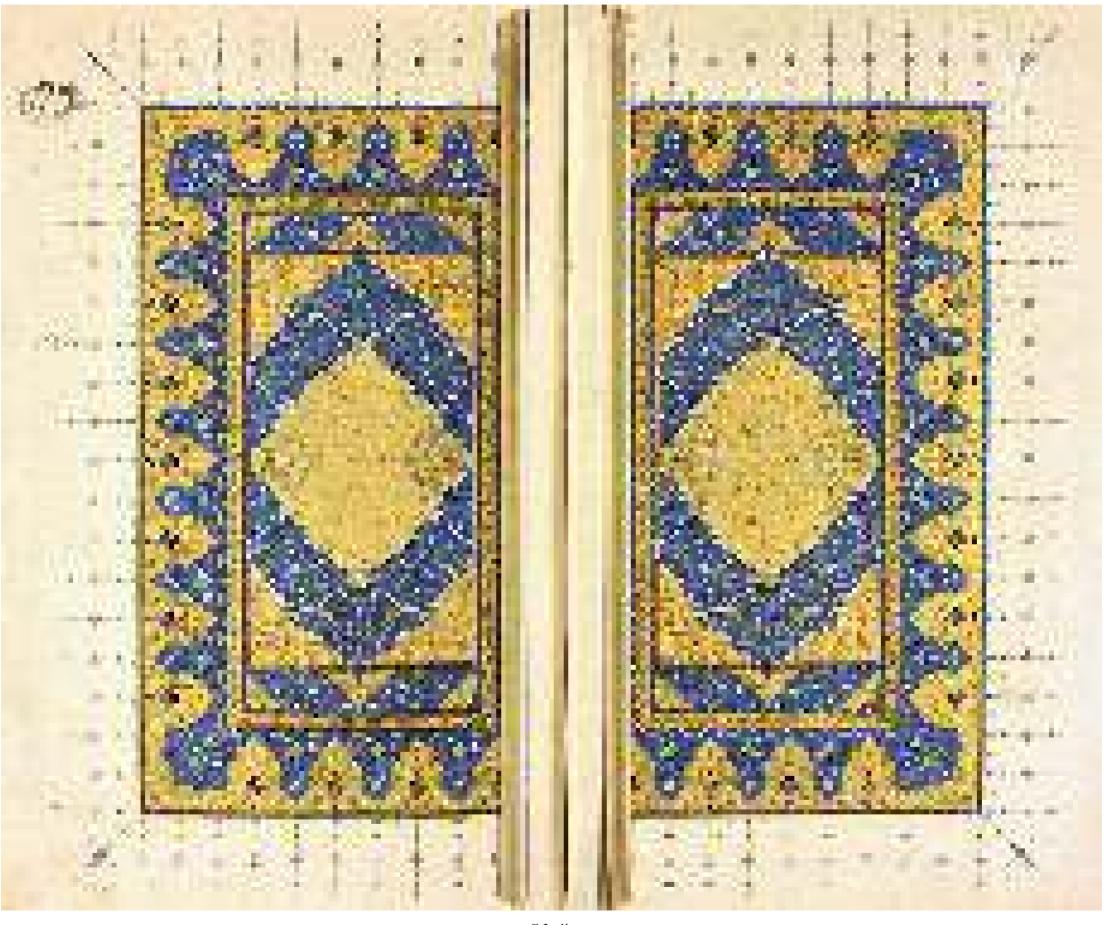


The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.756, created by Muhammad al-Katib Shirazi in AH 951/22 June – 22 July 1544 CE. It contains 27 miniatures typical of mid-16th century Shiraz style.

f. 79.

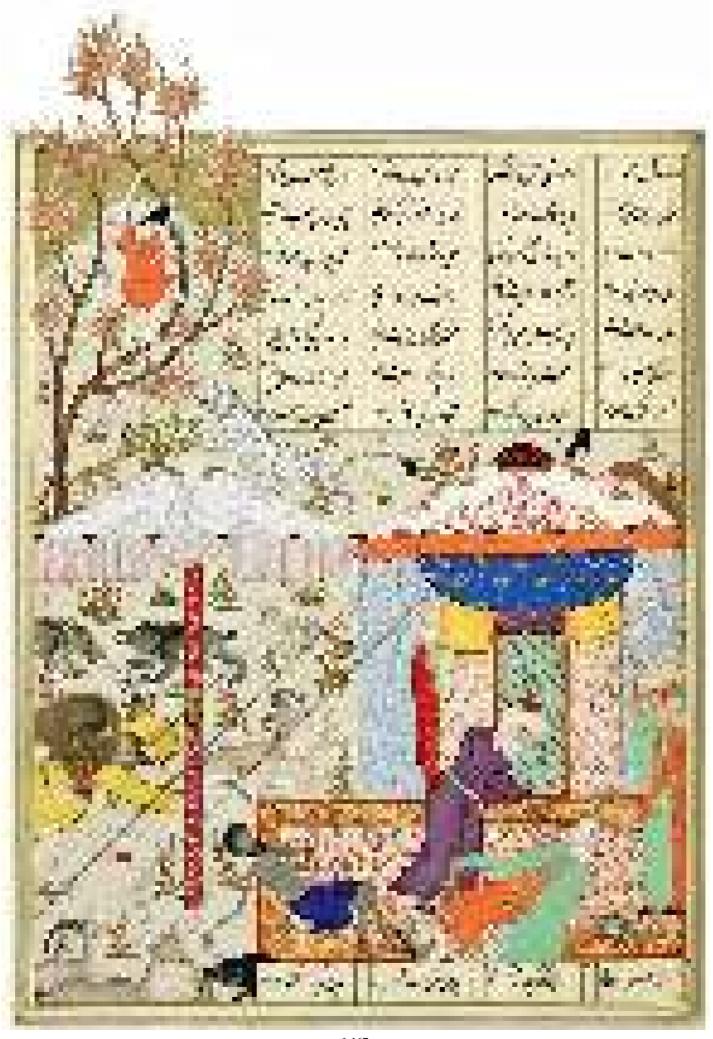
Shirin visits Farhad at Mount Bisitun.





ff. 2a-1b.
Illuminated double-paged frontispiece.

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f. 167. Leyli and Majnun faint at their meeting. A lion is attacking someone.





Iskandar watches Hermes who had turned listeners into stone.

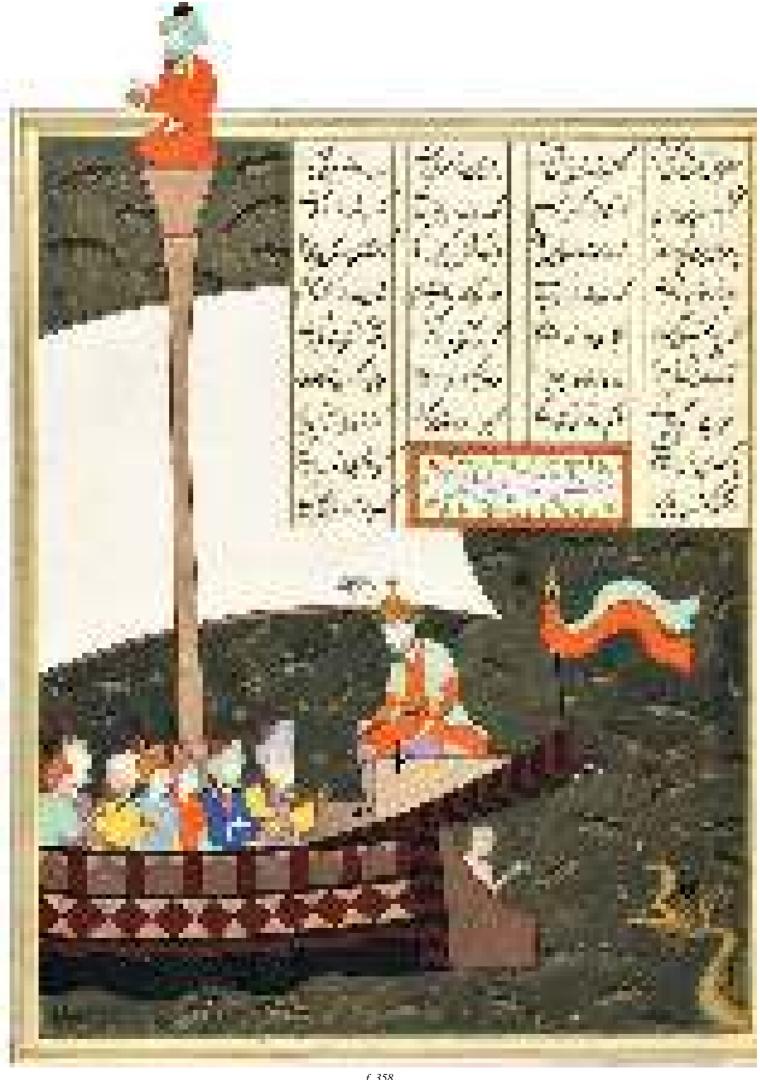






f. 344. Iskandar and the seven sages.





f. 358. Iskandar's sea voyage.



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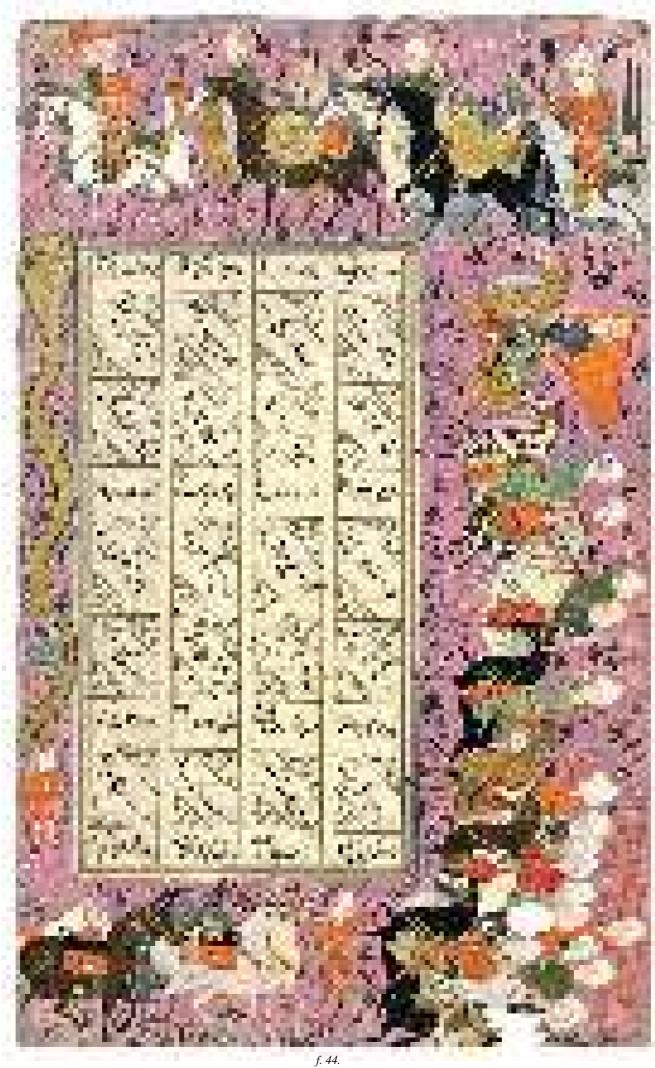


The *Khamsa* Manuscript R.867, created in AH 956/29 April – 28 May 1549 CE. Contains 16 miniatures by an unknown artist of the mid-16th century Shiraz school. The coloration and drawing technique indicate a good level of mastery.

Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing in the spring.

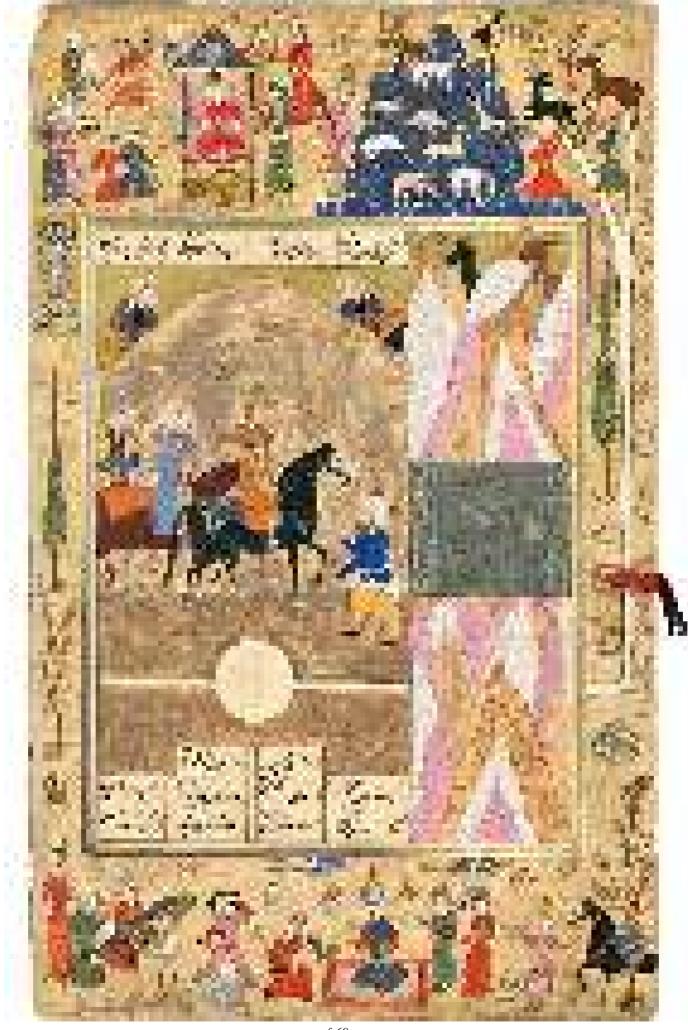






The right side of a diptych.

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f. 69. Shirin visits Farhad at Mount Bisitun.





Bahram Gur watches the hanging of the unjust vizier.

The *Khamsa* Manuscript R.870, created by Ali Quli ibn Qara. Completed in AH 963/15 November

All the miniatures, save those on folios 1 and 49, are contemporary with the text.

– 15 December 1555 CE. Contains 13 miniatures.

f. 1.

The young prince on the hunting ground with his cortege.

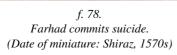
This miniature is a rough copy of an illustration to the late 16th century Shahnameh.

(British Library. Add. 27257; f.559 b, ref. "Shah Abbas", f.1)





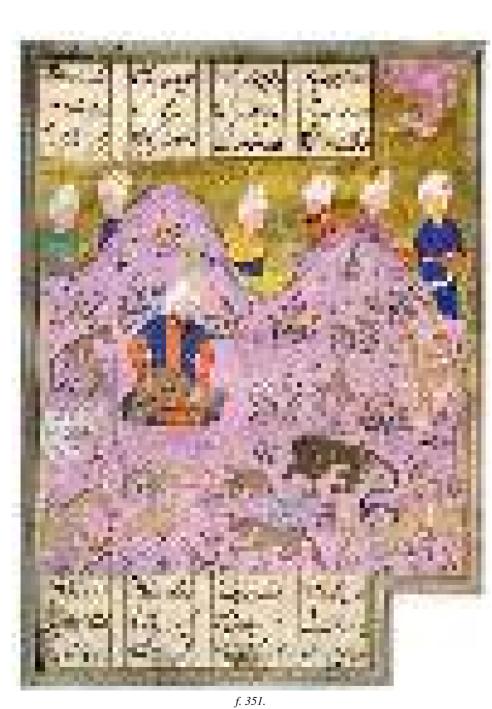
f. 49. Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing in the spring. There is a strong European influence. Probably late 17th century.





f. 136. Leyli and Majnun at school.





Plato enchants animals with his music.



Iskandar in the garden of Iram by King Shaddad's mausoleum.

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The *Khamsa* Manuscript R.879 only includes *Leyli and Majnun*. Created by Sultan Muhammad; it contains 8 miniatures; no other information is available.

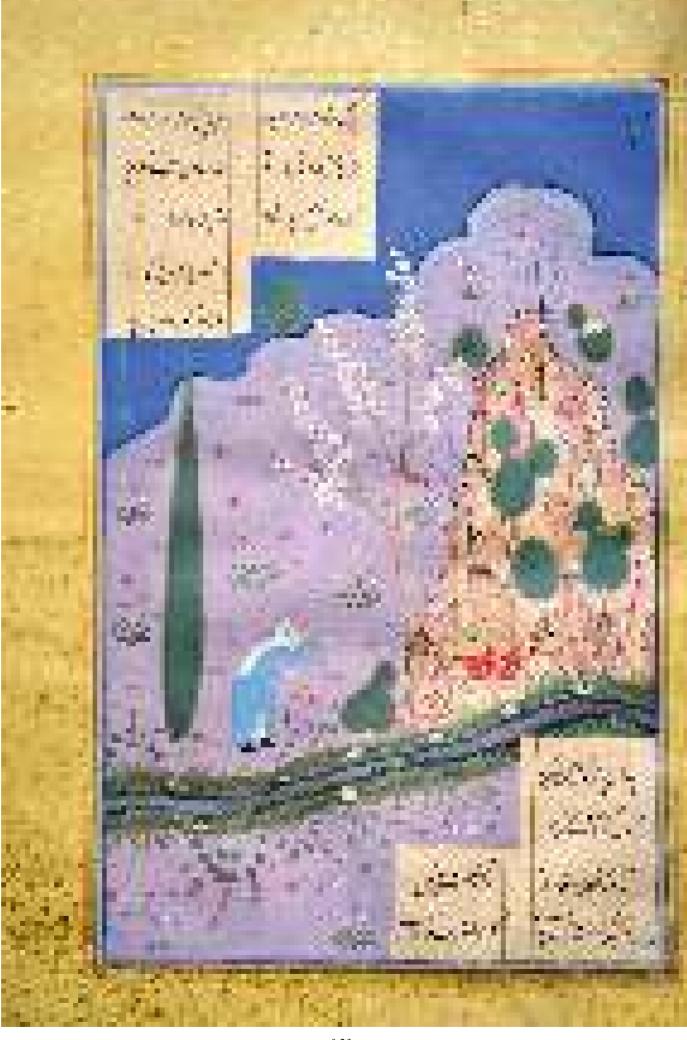
The illustrations on ff. 23, 29 and 65 are of a very high artistic level; the strong influence of the Tabriz miniature school is apparent. The miniatures are dated back to the 1560s.



f. 4.

The ascension (Mi'raj) of the Prophet
Muhammad.

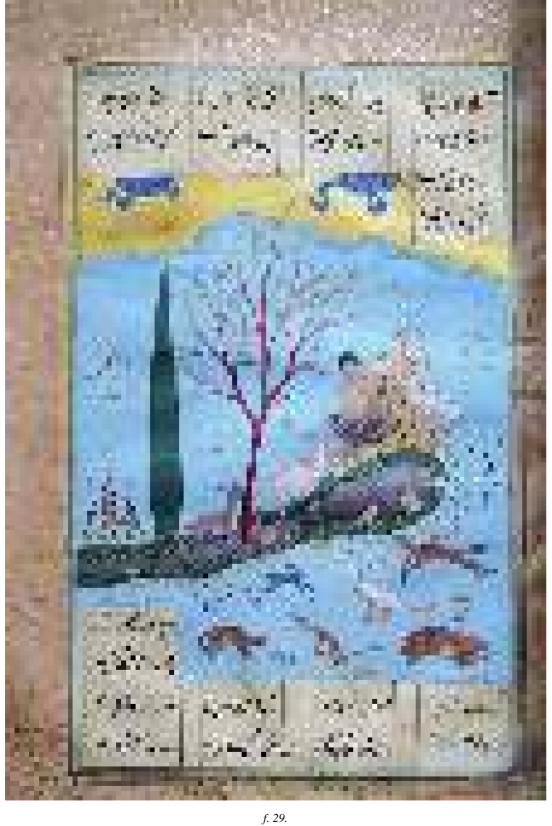


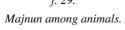


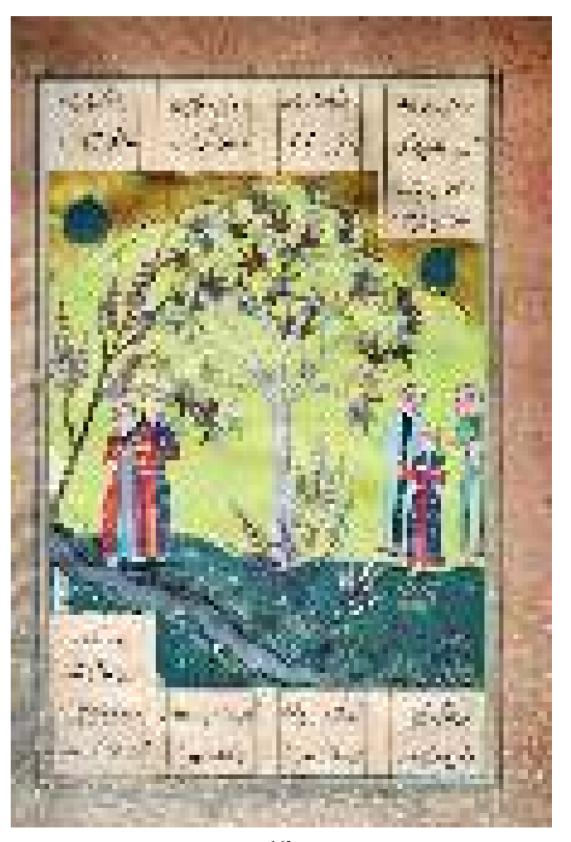
f. 23.

Majnun visited by an old woman in the desert.



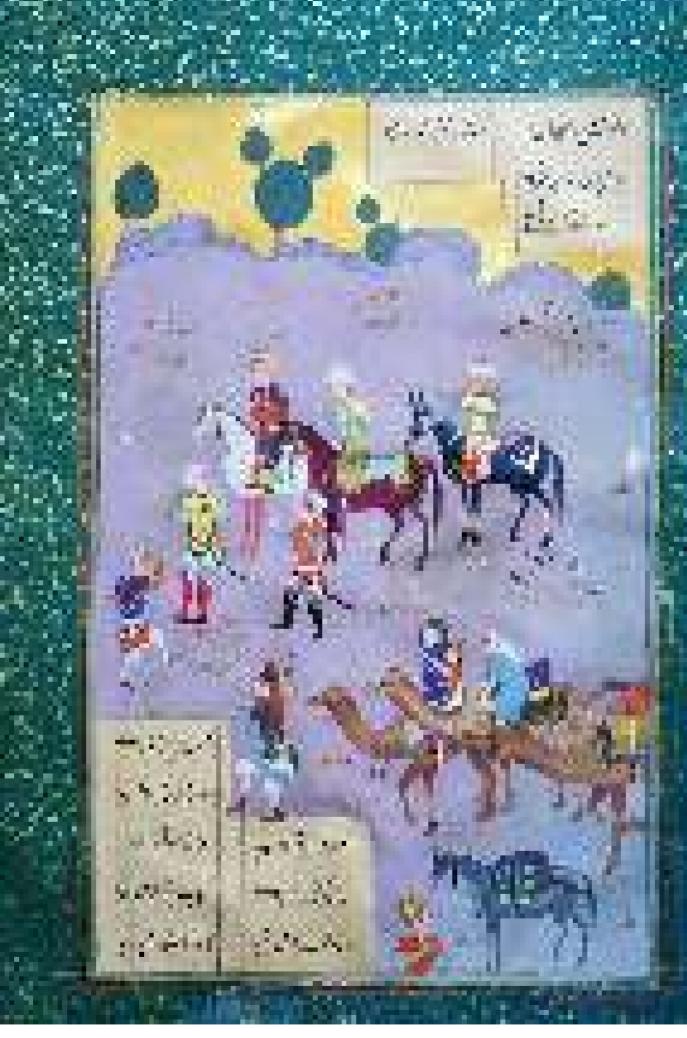






f. 65.
Two young women under a sycamore tree.





f. 64.

Ibn Salam riding a horse, followed by two women and his servant.

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The next phase of the Tabriz school's influence on Shiraz, from the 1530s–1550s resulted in significant changes to the southern city's style. This influence did not halt at that point; the Shiraz style continued to evolve. A new style emerged, which marked all works completed in the period between the 1550s and the year 1575, i.e. throughout the third quarter of the 16th century. This cardinal metamorphosis was the result of close ties developed with royal authorities who settled in Qazvin and Mashhad; when Shah Tahmasp disbanded his *kitabkhana*, leaving his artists without work, they went to seek the favour of other royal patrons of the Safavid dynasty.

We have to say that, save for manuscript R.877, we do not encounter any copies of the *Khamsa* with Qazvin and Mashhad-style miniatures. For some reason, works from those schools are not presented in this immensely rich collection. Interestingly, the library is not in possession of any miniatures created in either of those two Safavid capitals, even though they had left quite a few magnificent examples of book miniature art in the second half of the 16th century.







ff. 5a-4b.

Illustrated diptych.

The *Khamsa* Manuscript R.877, created by Muhammad Kasim ibn Sultan Mahmoud Ashgabadi. Date: AH 933/01 June – 01 August 1527 CE. Contains 23 miniatures.

The miniatures in manuscript R.877 were created almost half a century after the script's completion, and are dated from the 1570s–1580s, which complies with their style. This style represents the Qazvin school of those times, but the quality is quite poor.



ff. 6a-5b.
Illuminated double-paged frontispiece.



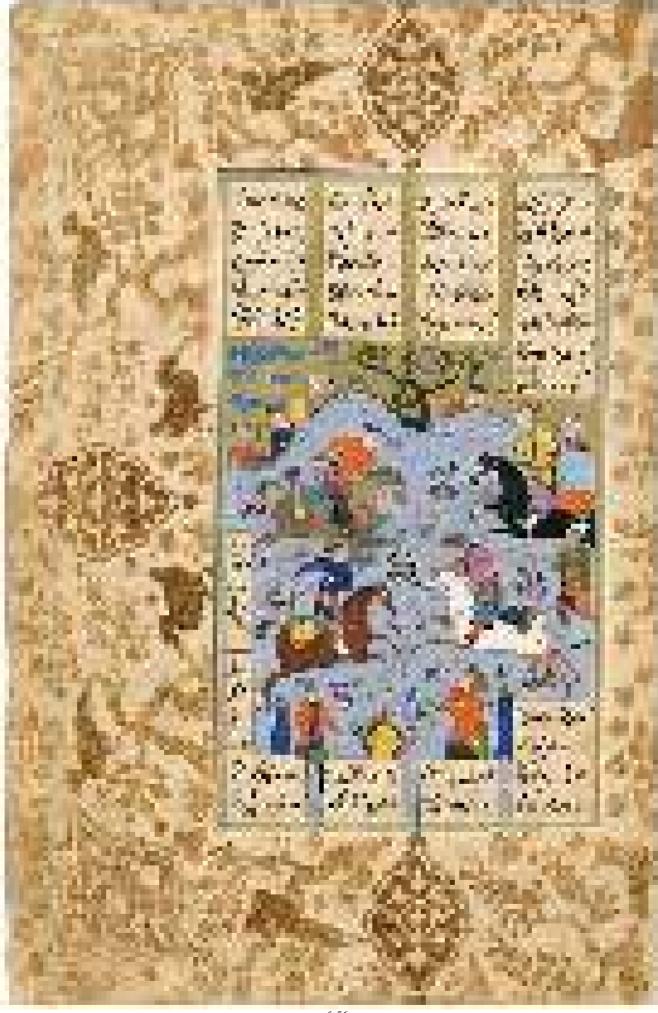






ff. 8a-7b.
Two beautiful pages with samples of calligraphy.

The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces



f. 56. Khosrow and Shirin playing chovgan.



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f. 72. Shirin visits Farhad at Mount Bisitun.



f. 142.

A servant of the King of Merv is thrown to angry dogs.





Back cover, outer.

Inner cover, inner.

164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 201 6.01.2022 16:08

It was in Tabriz that, by the mid-16th century, a skilful and complete Tabriz pictorial artistic style was formed. This style, inclusive of its principles, traditions and technique, soon became an academy of fine arts and was a role model for the whole Safavid world of culture. Thus, Tabriz masters influenced the origins of the broader Shiraz style, this time in its 'classical' form with borrowed academic techniques that would endow the image with a certain staginess, increase its kinetic flexibility and add a valuable balance and richness of coloration.

Quite a number of illustrated manuscripts in this 'classical' style (derived from Tabriz) were created in Shiraz in the second half of the 16th century. The Topkapı Palace Library possesses three such manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamsa*: A.3559, H.750, and B.146.



f. 20.
Sultan Sanjar and the old woman.





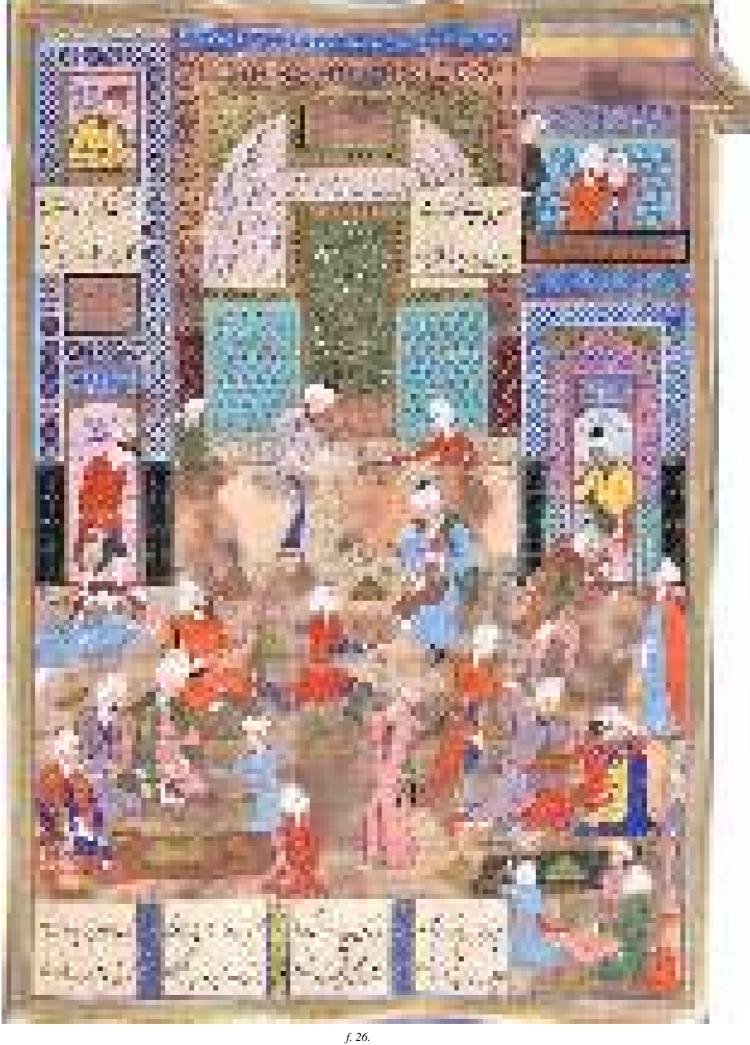


f. 24. Shah Faridun hunting deer.

The *Khamsa* Manuscript A.3559 contains some names: the calligrapher Shah Mahmud Nishapuri for Shah Ismayil. The date and place of origin are not indicated. There are 74 miniatures, which were added after completion of the text in the second half of the 16th century or, more precisely, in about the 1560s. They were created by several painters of different levels of artistry. For the most part, they are of good quality, while some are simply magnificent in both drawing and coloration.

As far as style is concerned, they belong to the Shiraz school. Ivan Stchoukine terms this style "Shiraz Classicism"; it is cool academic art with a perfect technique partially borrowed from the Tabriz palace school. Quite a few similar manuscripts, including the *Khamsa* of Nizami from BNF (S.P.1956), have come down to us. Judging by their style, they were created in Shiraz.

The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces



f. 26.

A feast in front of the tavern.

The story of an ascetic who renounced his vows.

Chapter IX of The Treasury of Mysteries.





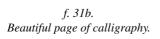
f. 29.

Young men look at their friend lying on the grass.

Illustration of the story of a young man who broke his spine.

Chapter XVI of The Treasury of Mysteries.

(Rare illustration)





f. 32a. A truthful old man before the Shah.





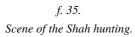
f. 34.

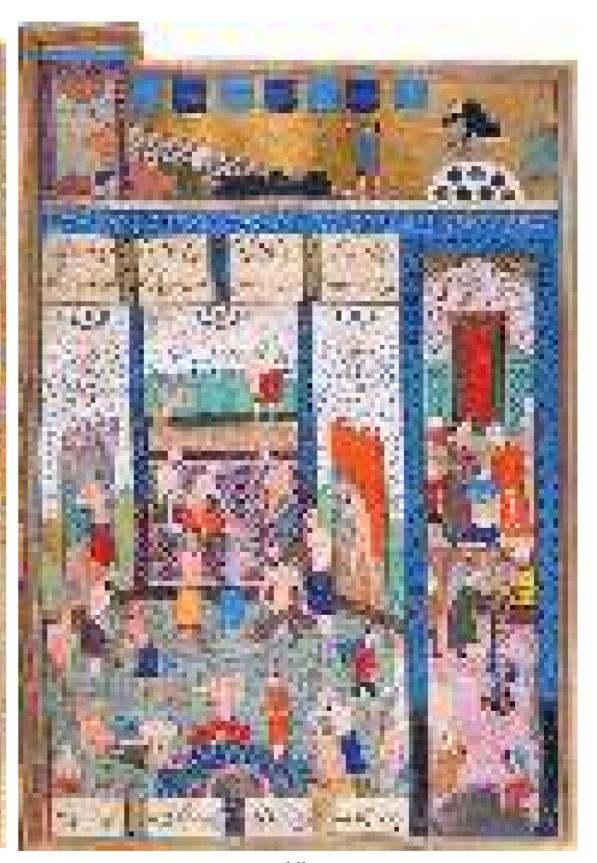
The Shah attends an execution: one convict is hanged, the second skinned alive and the third impaled.

(Rare illustration)









f. 40.

Caliph Harun al-Rashid and the barber.



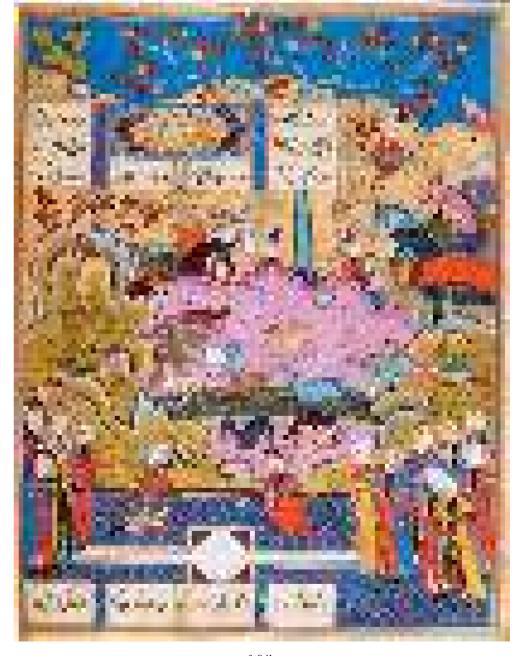


f. 50.

Khosrow seated in the pavilion with his suite.

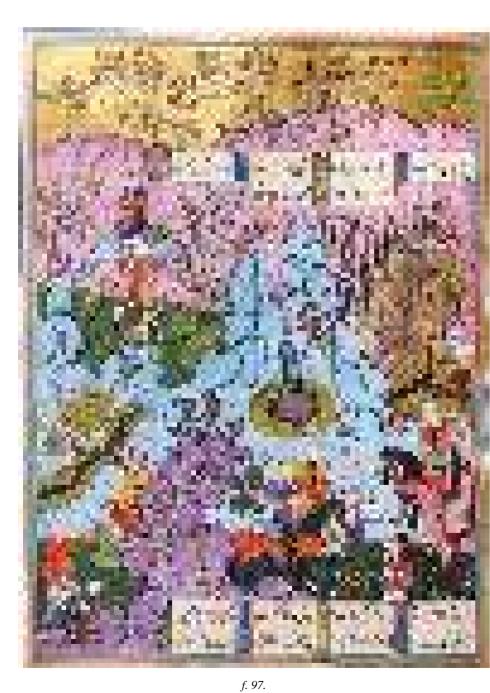
Khosrow and Shirin on the hunting ground.

f. 74.
The battle between Khosrow and Bahram Chubineh.

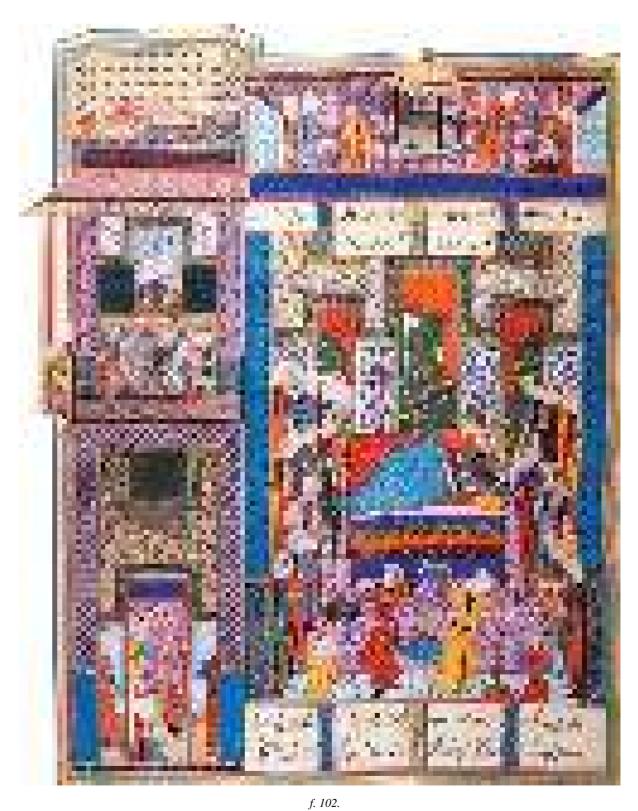


f. 84b.
Farhad carves a milk channel for Shirin.



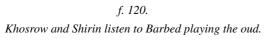


Farhad carrying Shirin and her horse on his shoulders.



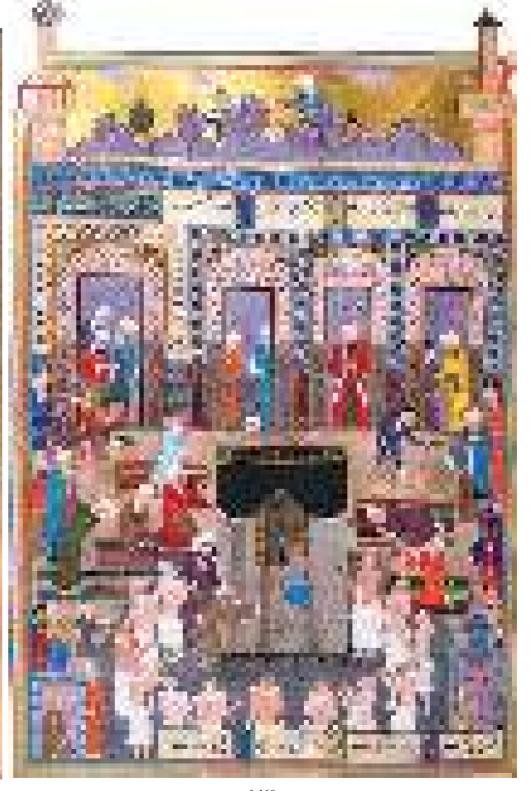
A scene of the lovers Khosrow and Shakar.

164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 211 6.01.2022 16:08



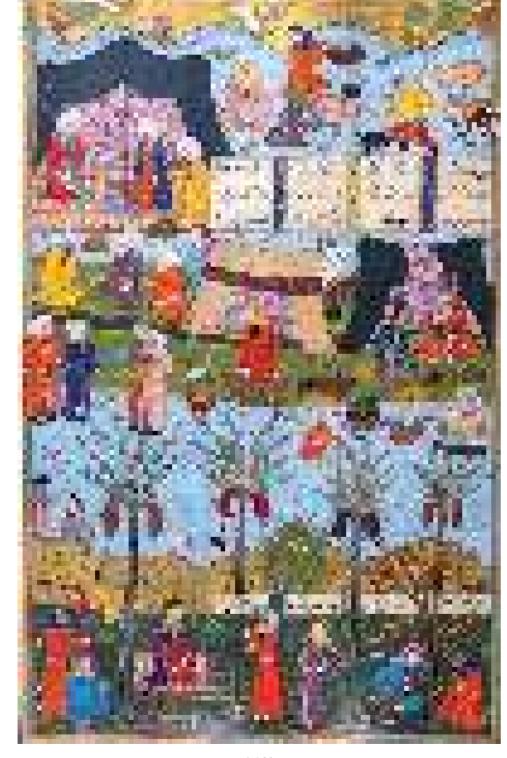


f. 128. Khosrow and Shirin in the bridal chamber.

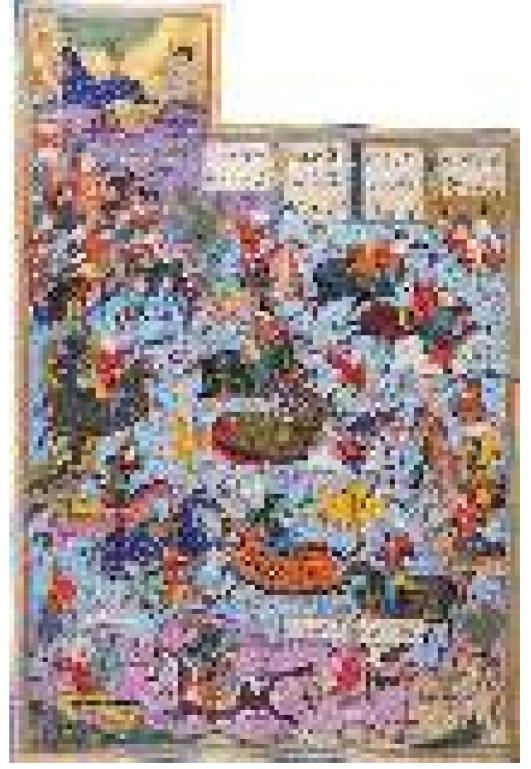


f. 154. Leyli and Majnun at school.

f. 160. Majnun before the Ka'ba.



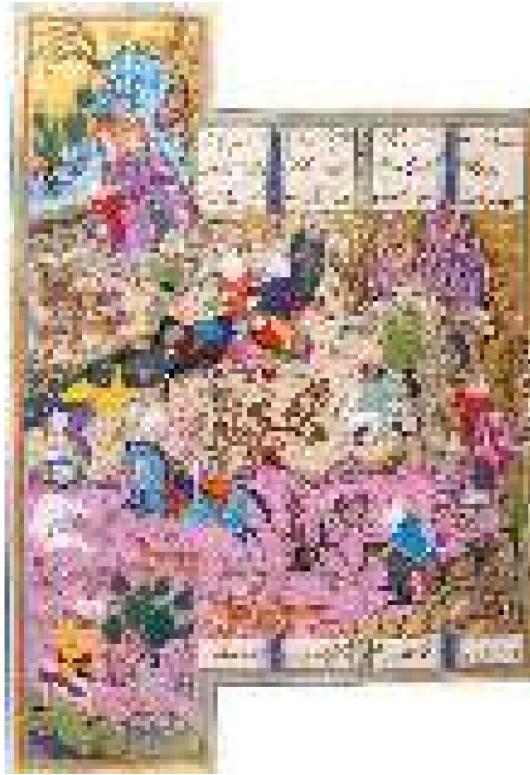
f. 166. Leyli before her tribe's camp.

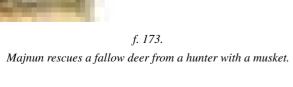


f. 169.

Majnun watches the battle of horse-riding tribes.



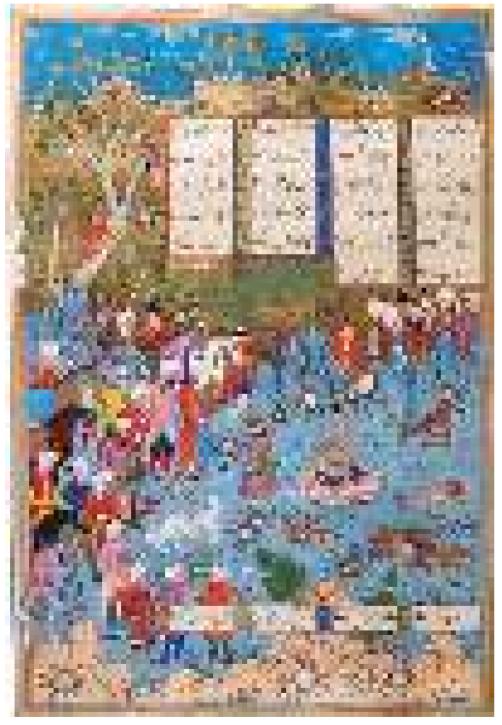






f. 176.

Leyli slaps ibn Salam in the face with such force that he falls to the floor.



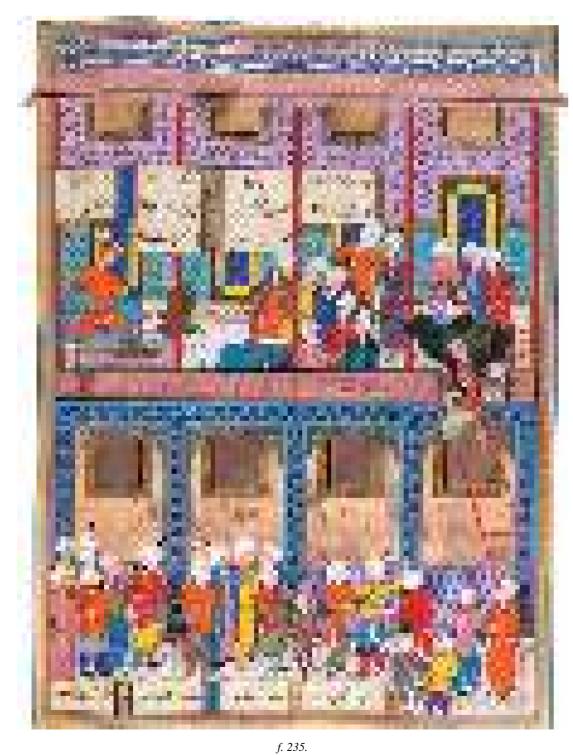
f. 195. Nofal with his suite visits Majnun.



f. 223. Bahram Gur hunts a lion and an onager.







Fitnah carries the bull on her shoulders before Bahram Gur.



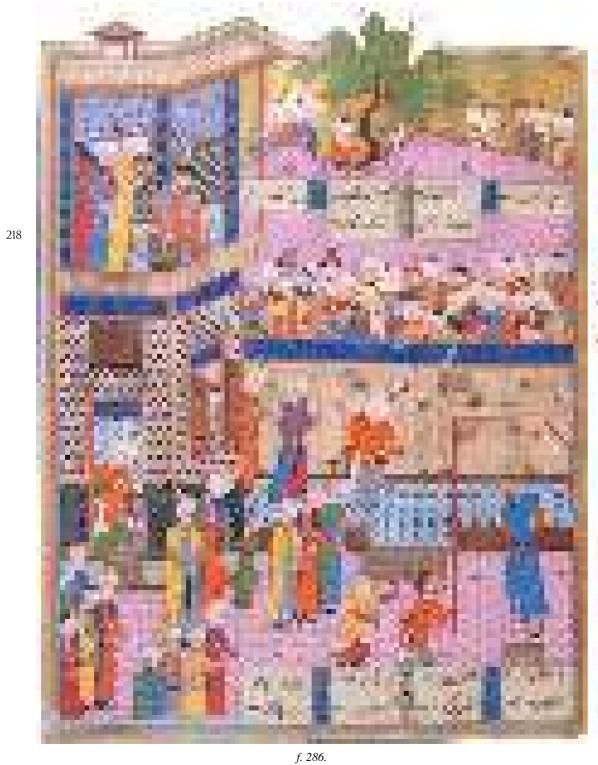
f. 261.

The wedding party of the young prince and the princess whose riddles he answered.

The tale of the Princess of the Red Dome.

(Rare illustration)

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Bahram attends the execution of his unjust vizier.



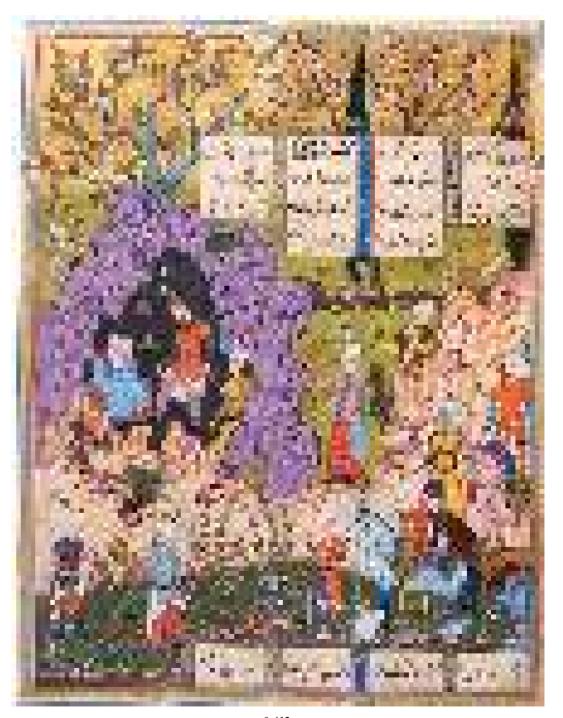
f. 350. Iskandar with his suite visits a hermit in his cave.





f. 358.

Iskandar and Roushanak in the bridal chamber.



f. 412.

Iskandar with his suite visits an Indian hermit in his cave.

164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 219 6.01.2022 16:08

f. 425.
Iskandar meets dwellers of the virtuous town.

f. 431.

Leaning on pillows, the sick Iskandar talks with Aristotle.





f. 441. The funeral of Iskandar.





Iskandar's sea voyage.





f. 446b.

Iskandar raises a wall against the savage tribes of Gog and Magog.

The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces

The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.750, created by Shah Muhammad. The year of completion of the manuscript has been changed to AH 779/1378 CE but, judging by the style of 26 Shiraz-style miniatures, it is probably AH 989/1581 CE. All the miniatures were created in the same period.

The illustrations in manuscript H.750 are of good quality; they belong to the Shiraz school of the second half of the 16^{th} century, and were definitely completed around 1580, concurrently with the text.



f. 2a. The Queen of Sheba Bilkis among her retinue. (Rich framing of a diptych)

f. 1b.
Suleyman and his vizier Asaf with renowned geniuses.
(Rare illustration)

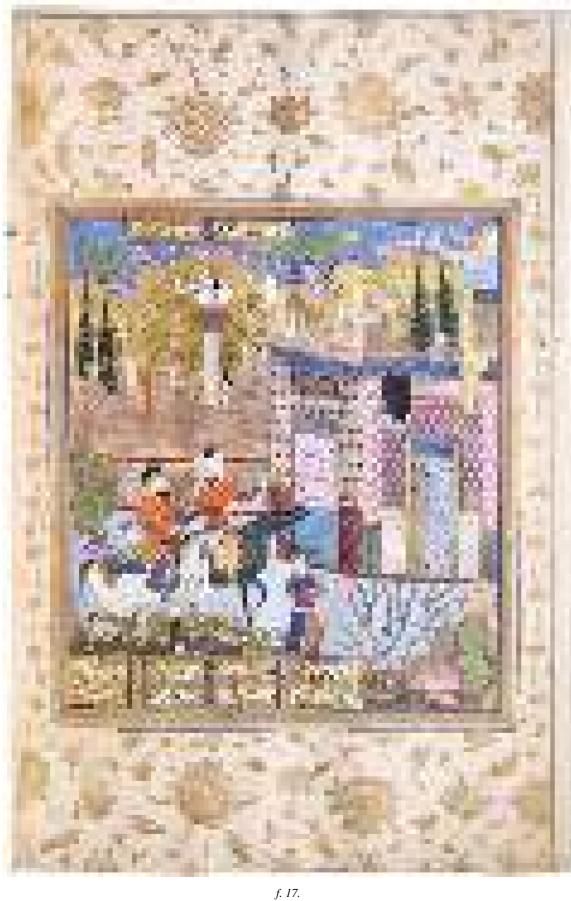


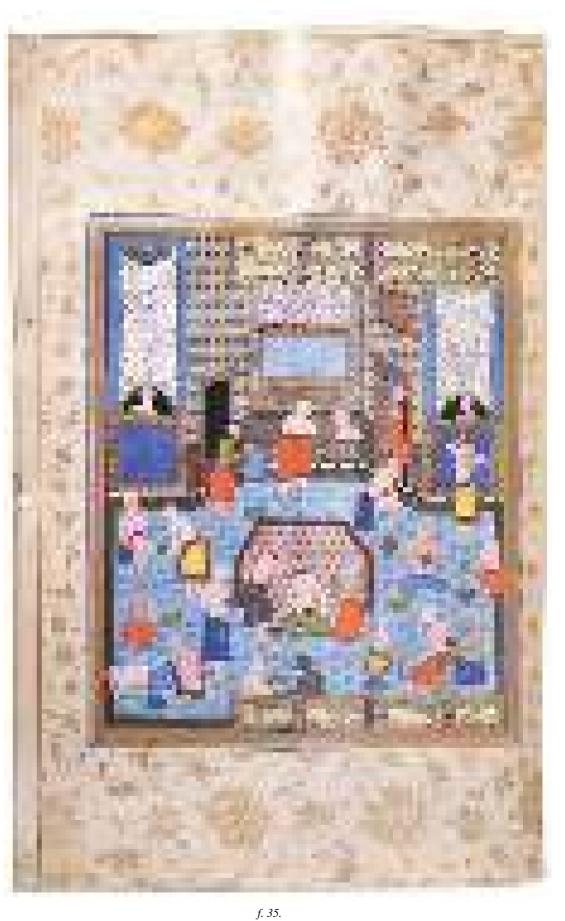




Illuminated double-paged frontispiece.





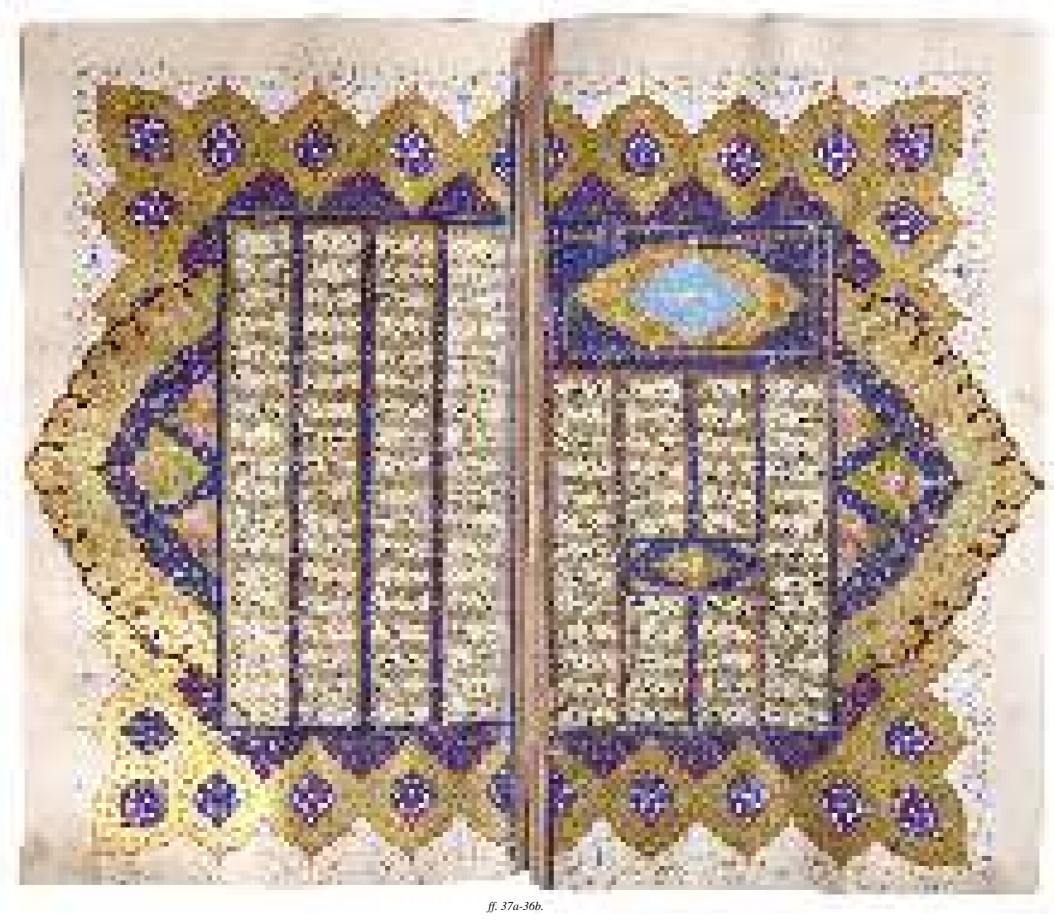


Nushiravan and his vizier listening to two owls in a ruined village.

J. 33.

Caliph Harun al-Rashid and the barber.





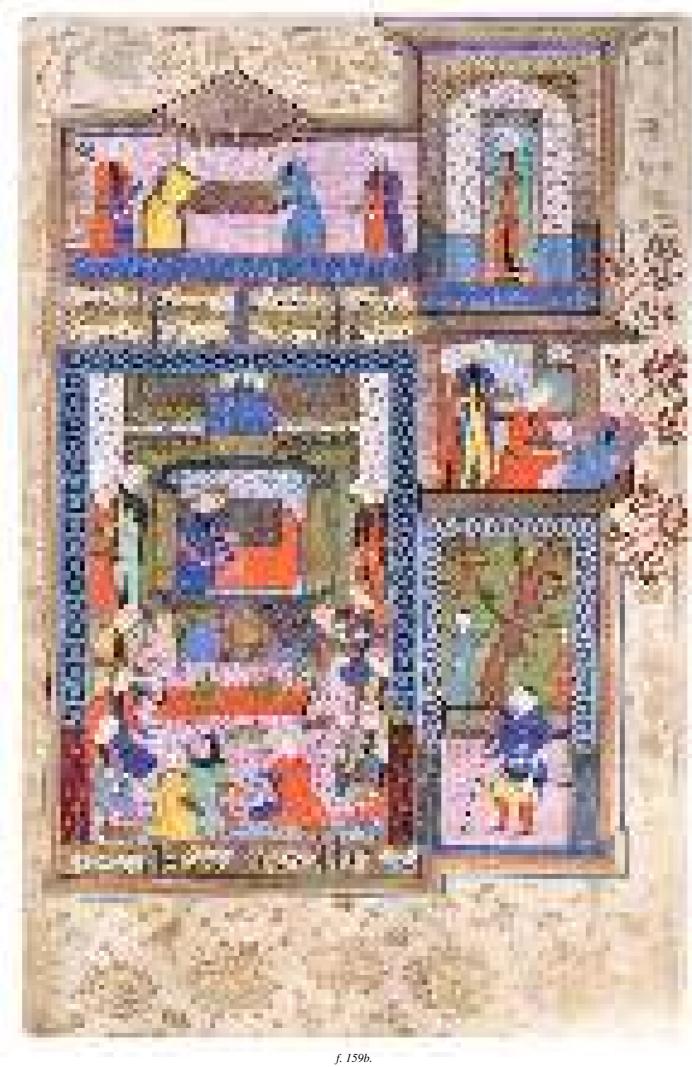
Text with very rich framing.



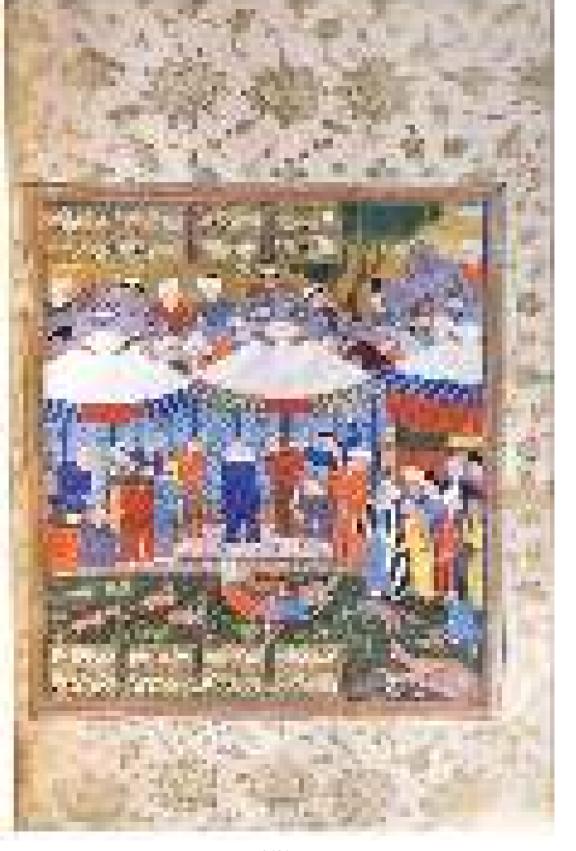
f. 85.
Farhad carries Shirin and her horse on his shoulders.

164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 228



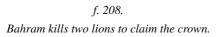


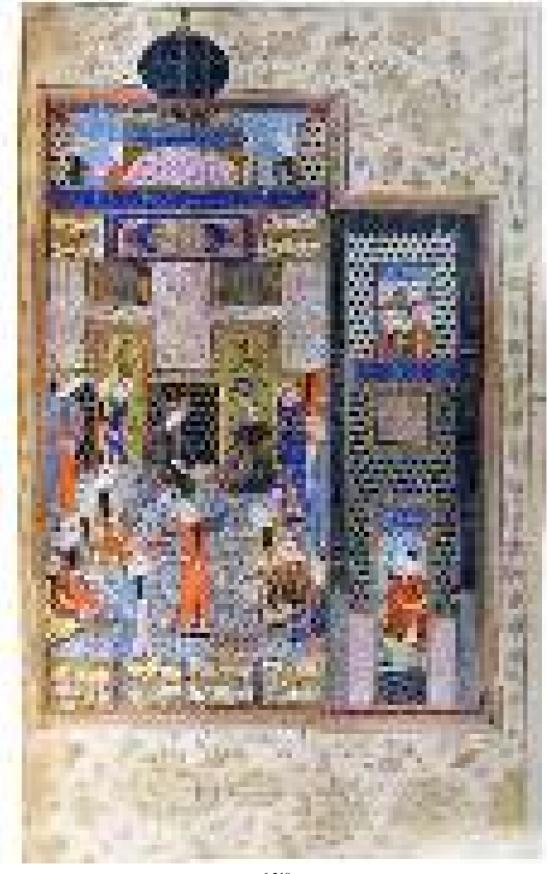
Leyli slaps Ibn Salam in the face, with such force that he falls unconscious to the floor.



f. 166. Majnun in the desert.

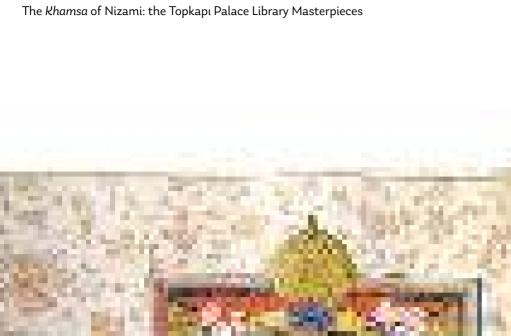
f. 184. Leyli and Majnun faint.





f. 218.
Bahram and the Princess of the Black Dome.

164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 231 6.09





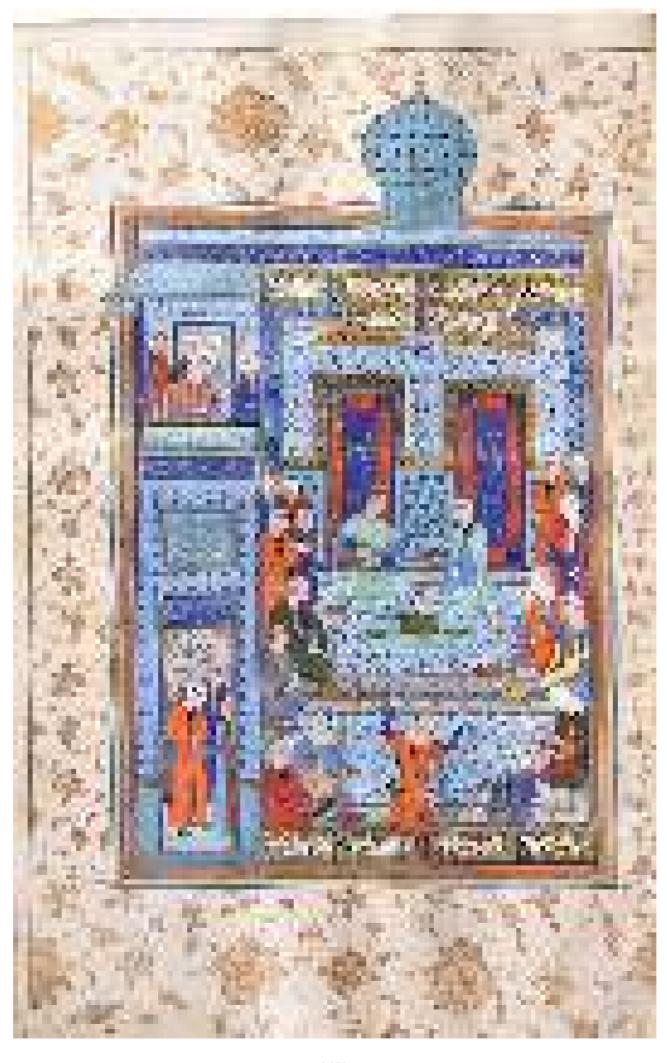


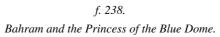
f. 226. Bahram and the Princess of the Yellow Dome.



f. 228. Bahram and the Princess of the Green Dome.



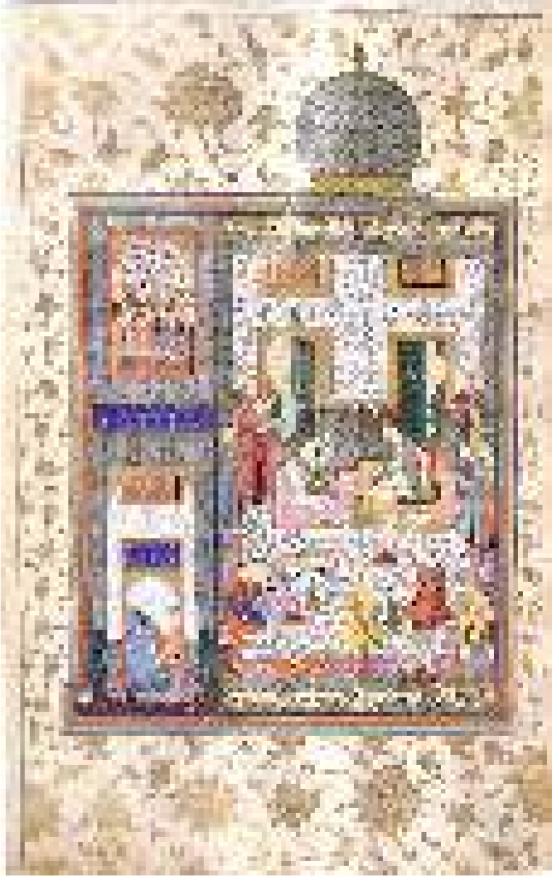




The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces



Bahram and the Princess of the Sandalwood Dome.



f. 249.

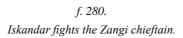
Bahram and the Princess of the White Dome.

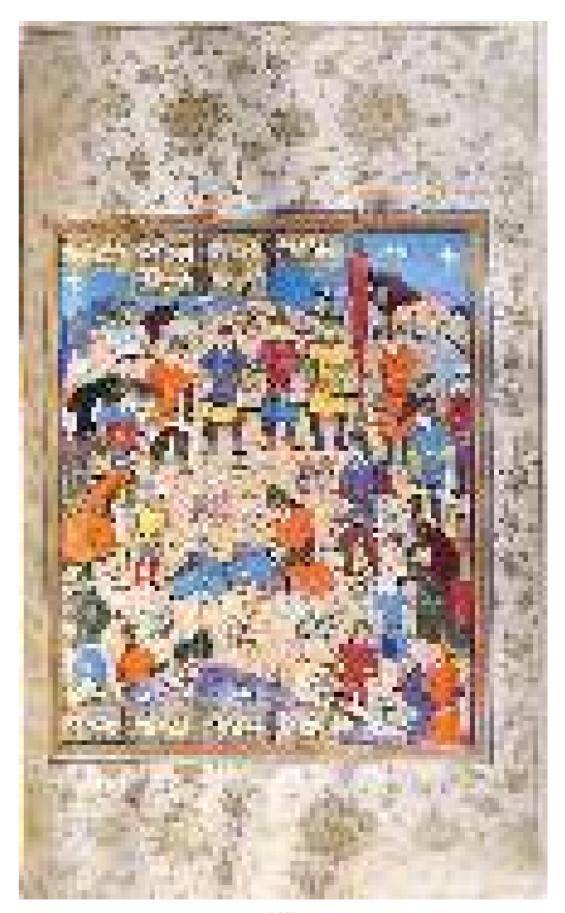




ff. 262a-261b.
Richly decorated heading of Iskandarnameh.

164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 235

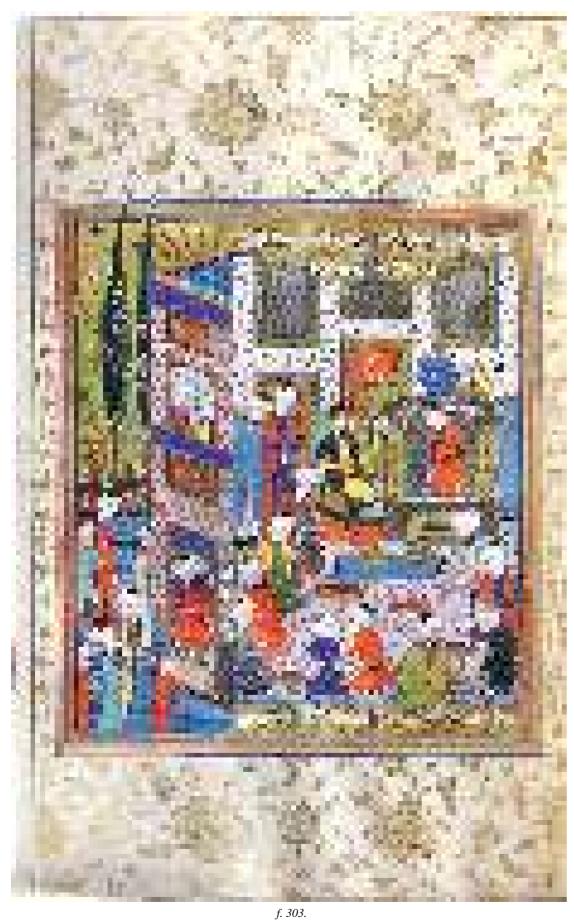




f. 297.

Iskandar comforting the dying Darius.







Nushaba recognizes Iskandar from his portrait.

f. 319. Led by Khizr, Iskandar heads to the Land of Darkness.



f. 337. Iskandar and the Chinese Khagan.

f. 365. Iskandar amazed at the sight of listeners turned to stone by Hermes.





Back cover, outer.

Inner cover, inner.

The *Khamsa* Manuscript B.146. The date and place of origin are not indicated.

It contains 65 miniatures, created in Shiraz from the 1560s–80s. We are not in a position to assert that they were drawn by a single artist although, based on their style and performance technique, they can be attributed to one *kitabkhana*. They are generally of high quality and represent the peak of miniature art in Shiraz.







Back cover with flap, inner.



Back cover with flap, outer.





ff. 2a-1b. The Shah's feast with his retinue.

They form a diptych, and are framed by a rich margin.

We see many Safavid turbans in this two-page composition.

They are not encountered further on, except in miniatures on ff. 298, 303, and 307.

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f.14. Angels worshipping Adam. Satan who refuses to kiss the ground before the first man and claims that only Allah deserves such worship is standing aside in the lower left corner.



The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces



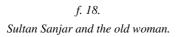








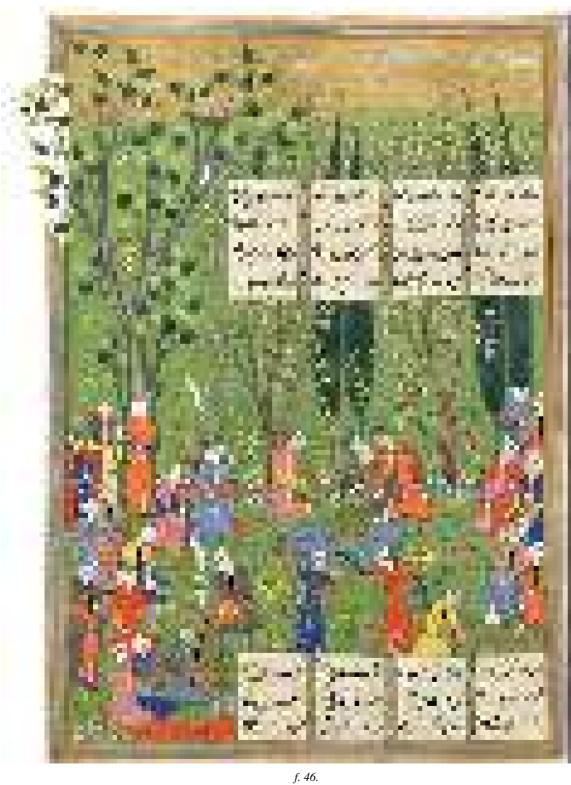
ff. 3a-2b.
Illuminated double-paged sarloukh.

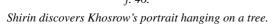


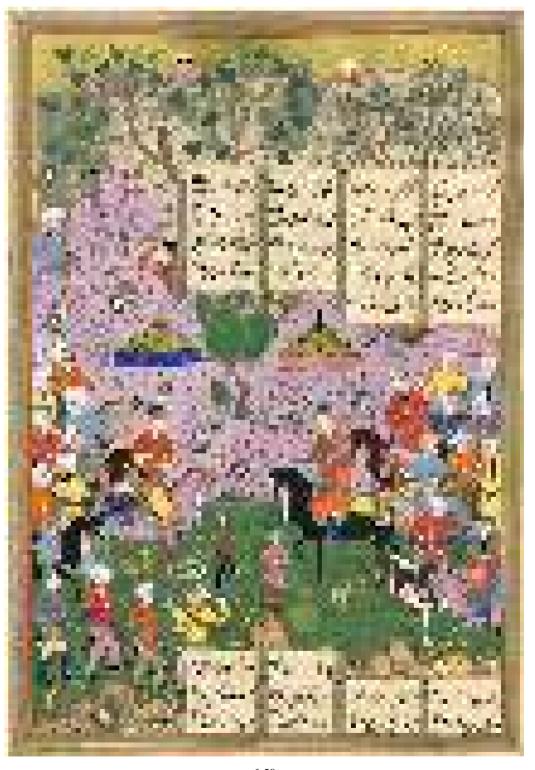


f. 32.
Caliph Harun al-Rashid and the barber.







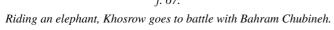


f. 58.

Khosrow and Shirin riding horses with their retinue.

164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 247







f. 77. Shapur at Shirin's reception.







f. 142. Majnun before the Ka'ba.

The battle between Leyli's and Majnun's tribes.

164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 249 6.01.2022 16:14

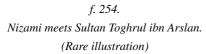


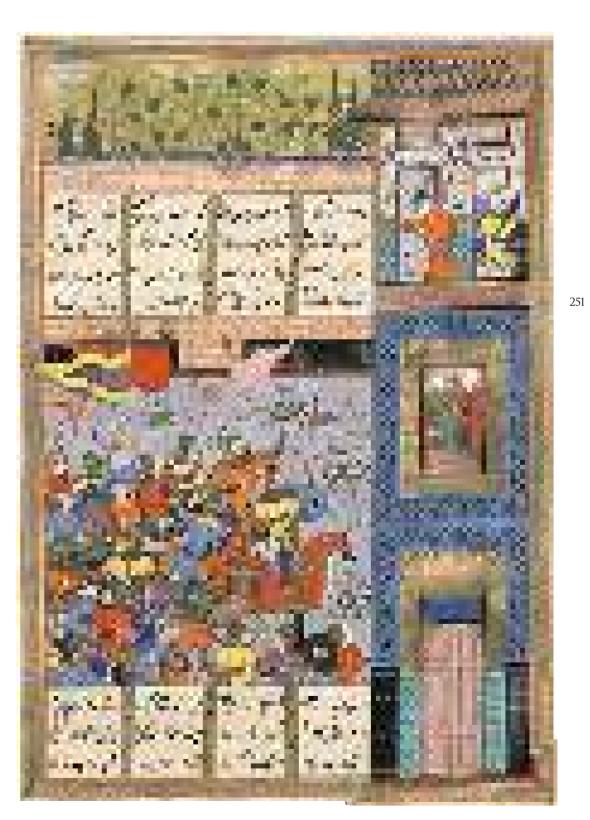


f. 192. Bahram Gur slays the dragon.









f. 271. Iskandar with his army before Darius's castle. (Rare illustration)

164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 251 6.01.2022 16:14

f. 364.

Iskandar with his soldiers before a pit full of gems and snakes.

To obtain them and avoid being bitten by snakes, Iskandar resorts to cunning: he orders that pieces of fresh meat be thrown into the pit; the gems stick to the meat, which is carried away by birds of prey onto surrounding rocks.

Without hesitation, the soldiers pick the gems from the meat.









Iskandar on a voyage accompanied by soldiers on board another ship.

f. 377. The death of Iskandar.

164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 253



The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces













ff. 381a-380b. Diptych. Shah hunting.

Created in Tabriz under Shah Tahmasp, the classical Safavid style became the uncontested standard for all the empire's artistic centres, and then spread beyond the state, across India and Turkey. But this period of influence did not last long; its fate was predestined when, in the 17th century, the capital was relocated from Qazvin to Isfahan. Under the young Shah Abbas, the old style gave way to a new one, with new themes and traditions.

The 1590s-1600s Isfahan style is represented by the manuscript R.881.

An ingenious artist, Riza Abbasi introduced a brand-new style of painting: this revolutionary style put an end to its Tabriz counterpart and had a huge impact on the art world. Abbasi created a new manner of vision and representation in the Isfahan school, thus supplanting the bicentennial Timurid-Safavid tradition.

f. 2a. The left side of an illuminated double-paged sarloukh.

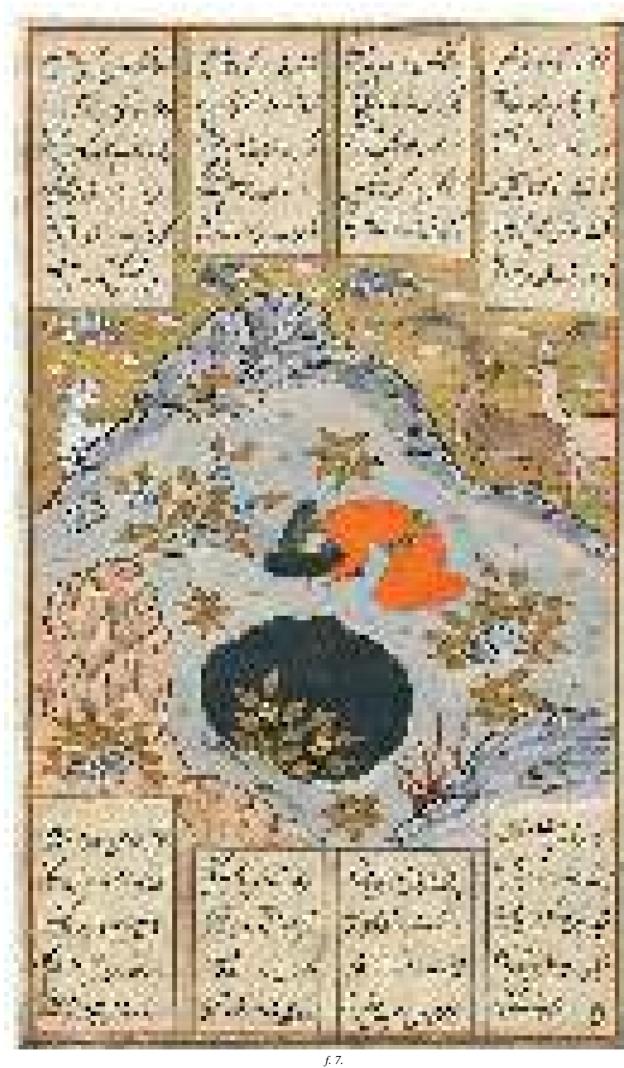












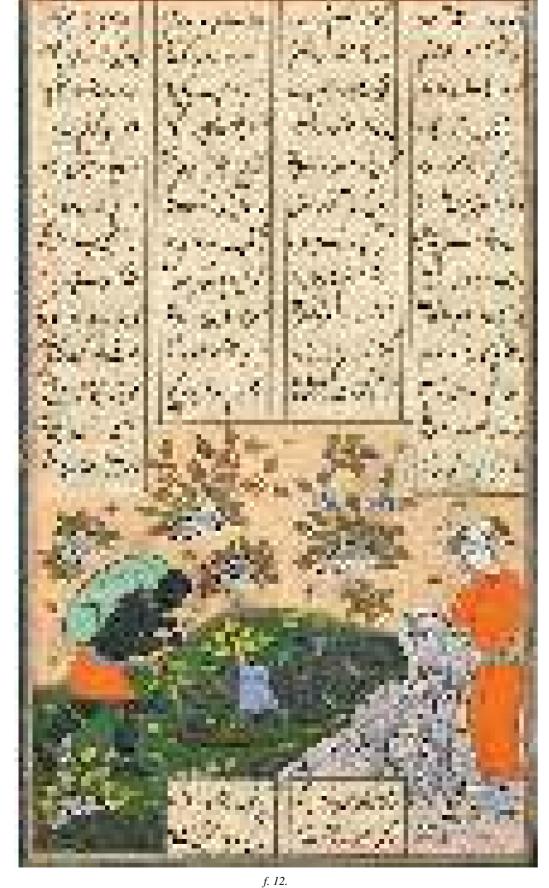
Iskandar's barber reveals his master's secret to the well.

His new style stemmed from quick, skilful painting, often incomplete, with lines flowing freely to no pre-set pattern. Coloration also changed from the classical and became both dissonant and accordant at the same time, in strange combinations.

The *Khamsa* Manuscript R.881 contains *Hirad* name-yi *Iskandari* and *Leyli and Majnun* and is illustrated by 9 miniatures.

The miniatures in this manuscript are in the Isfahan style and belong to the period two decades before the inception of Riza Abbasi's style; thus, they can be placed roughly between 1590 and 1610. With the exception of two miniatures, they are of good quality.





A black man kills his brother and steals his riches.

Hiding behind the rocks, the baker's son watches the drama.

(Rare illustration)



f. 16.

Seated on the throne in his palace, Iskandar talks with Socrates who is on his haunches before him.



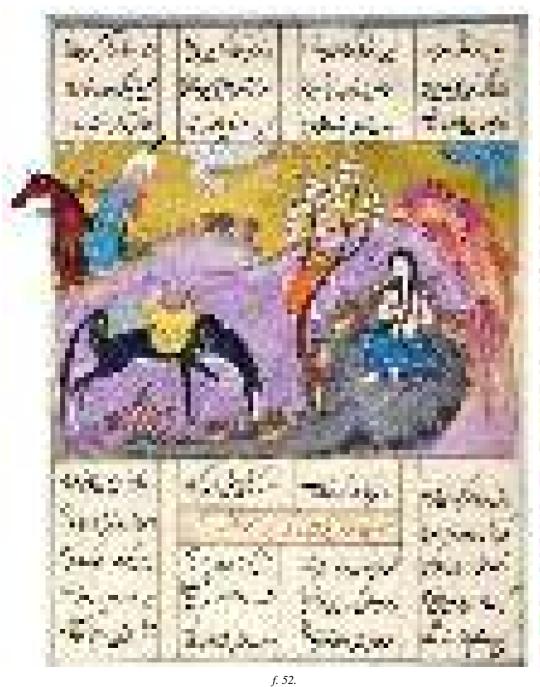


f. 22. Iskandar's conversation with Aristotle.

Iskandar before the Golden Idol at Kandahar.

164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 259 6.01.2022 16:15 Most illustrated copies of Nizami's *Khamsa* held in the Topkapı museum were brought there from other domains, while a small number (seven copies) are illustrated with miniatures created by Ottoman artists. These examples represent either the palatial or the lower-class style of the Ottoman Empire.

The *Khamsa* Manuscript B.145, created by Misali Kashani. The manuscript was completed in Muharram AH 904/August – September 1498 CE. The place of origin is not indicated. There are 15 miniatures, which were drawn in a fairly simple style, but still display some bold and expressive patterns. They are probably Ottoman; apparently, they were included in the manuscript in Turkey between 1525 and 1560.



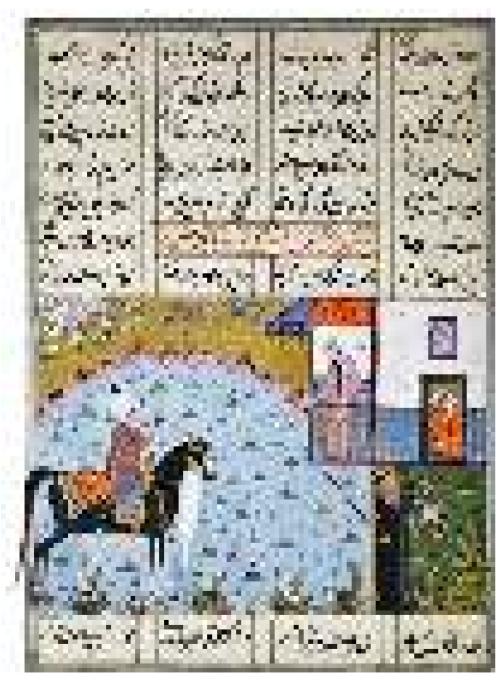
Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing in the spring.



f. 61.

Khosrow kills a lion with a punch outside Shirin's tent.





f. 92. Khosrow before Shirin's castle.



f. 281.

A Zangi grabs an elephant by the trunk.

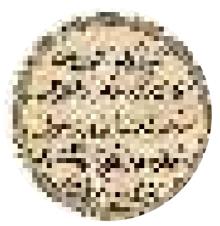
The black man wears a white külah. People are watching his feat from afar. They wear Safavid turbans.

(Rare illustration)

164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 261 6.01.2022 16:15

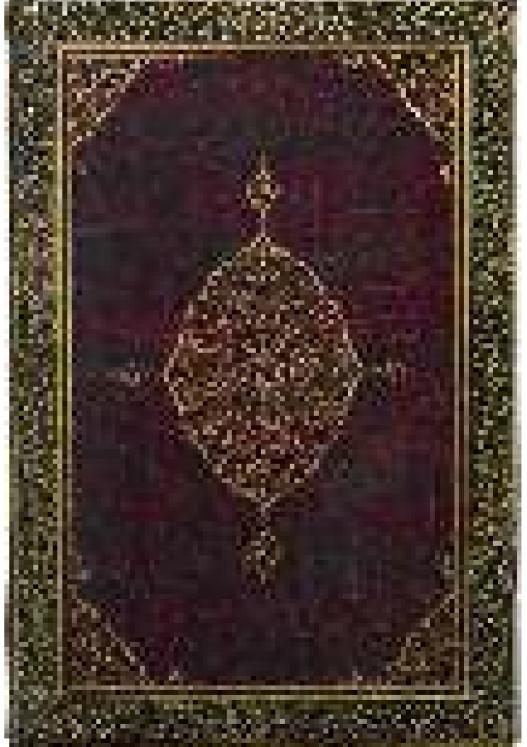
The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces

The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.757 names famous personalities: the colophon (f.288) bears the name of the calligrapher: created by Sultan Ali al-Mashhadi for Shah Ismayil Safavi; design is by Mawlana Yari, date: AH 916/10 April 1510 – 30 March 1511 CE. Illustrations painted by Behzad on AH 918/19 March 1512 – 8 March 1513 CE. The manuscript contains 24 miniatures.



Seal





Front cover, outer.

Front cover, inner.





f. 1b.

A young prince on the throne, with a goblet in his hands, on the terrace, surrounded by his retinue.

Tabriz style. 1525–1530s.

f. 2a.

A princess sits on the carpet in front of the pavilion in the garden among her ladies-in-waiting.

Maidens serve goblets. A wonderful diptych.

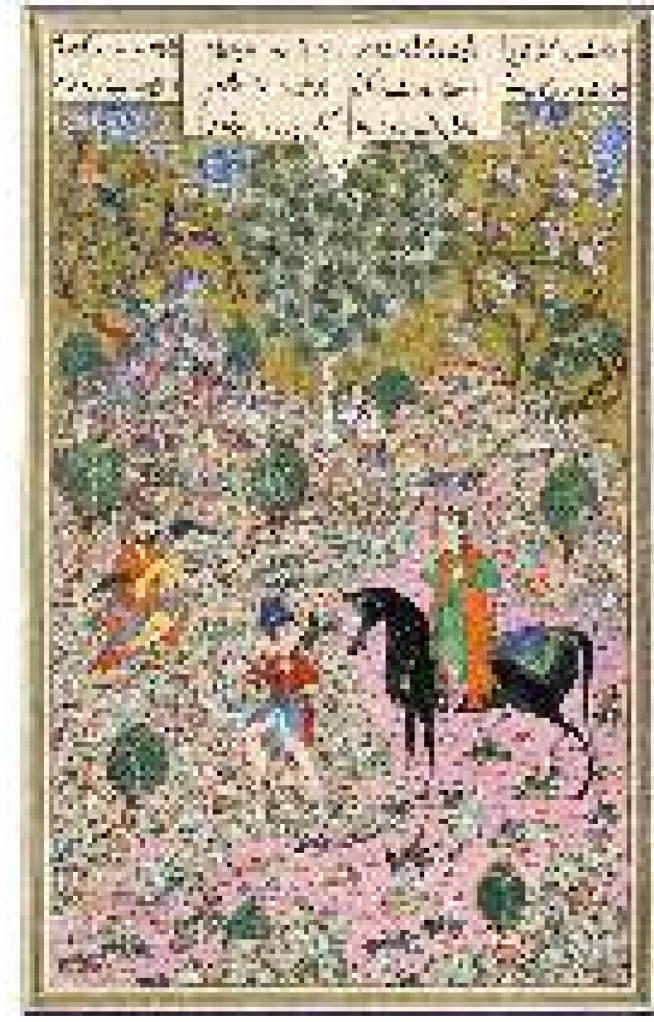
164-275 NIZAMI chapter-8-b ing.indd 263 6.01.2022 16:15

ff.3a-2b.

An illuminated double-paged frontispiece.







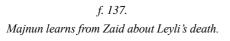
f. 93. Shirin visits Farhad on Mount Bisitun. Beautiful scenery.

In his fundamental work *Peintures des Manuscrits Timurides* (1966. v.1, p.62) Stchoukine writes: "It is to be noted that the data in the colophon is totally erroneous; none of the famous masters mentioned in the colophon participated in the creation of this manuscript. The calligrapher's handwriting looks nothing like that of the Mashhad master; the quite mediocre decorative ornamentation is quite poor compared with that of Mawlana; as far as the miniatures are concerned, they are much worse than that celebrated artist's paintings. The customer's identity, i.e., the first Safavid ruler, is also quite doubtful."

Having reviewed the miniatures in this manuscript, we draw the following conclusion: some of them were drawn by Safavid artists, but most are typically Ottoman. They were most likely created in the Sultan's *kitabkhana* in Istanbul, which is confirmed by the fine quality of the Turkish-style miniatures. On the other hand, the presence of Safavid masters implies their working in the Sultan's *kitabkhana* alongside the Ottomans.

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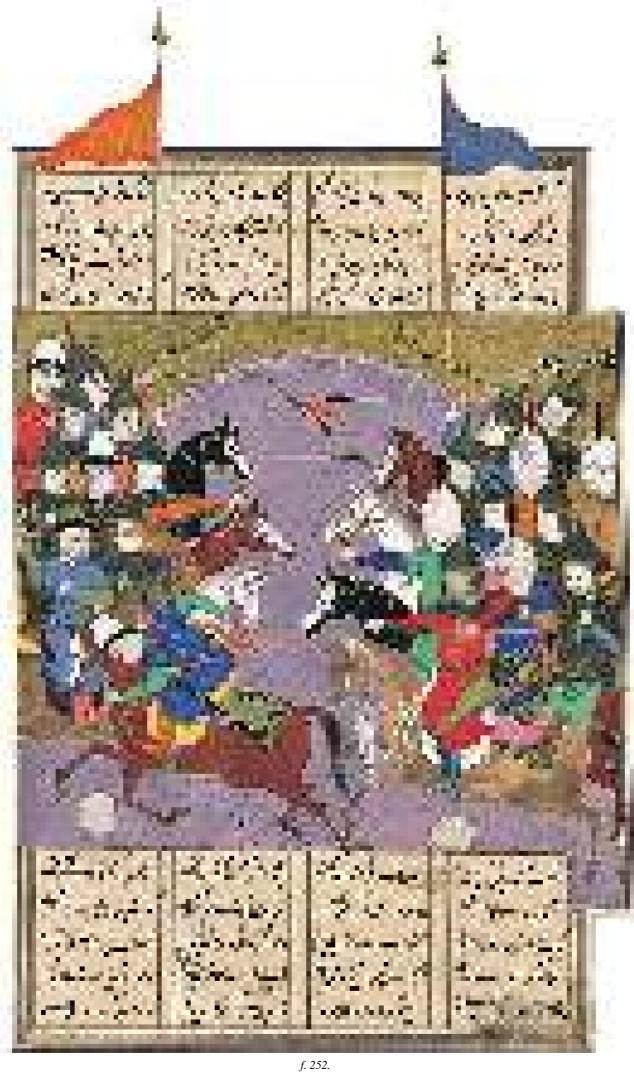




Iskandar attacks Darius's cavalry.

266





The battle between Iskandar's cavalry and the Rus army.

The *Khamsa* Manuscript H.1510, created by Lutfullah ibn Yahya ibn Muhammad al-Tabrizi. The manuscript was completed in Rajab AH 906/21 January – 19 February 1501 CE in Shiraz. Nizami's text, which begins from page 501, is bound together with Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*. Date: AH 903/1498 CE. The latter part, however, is not of interest to this review.

The miniatures were added in Shiraz long after the manuscript was created. We do not know how the manuscript emerged in Istanbul or where it was illustrated. The miniatures are in Ottoman painting style, and resemble others created in Istanbul around the 1570s.

f. 502.
Suleyman seated on the throne outdoors, listening to musicians.





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The Khamsa of Nizami: the Topkapı Palace Library Masterpieces



f. 657.

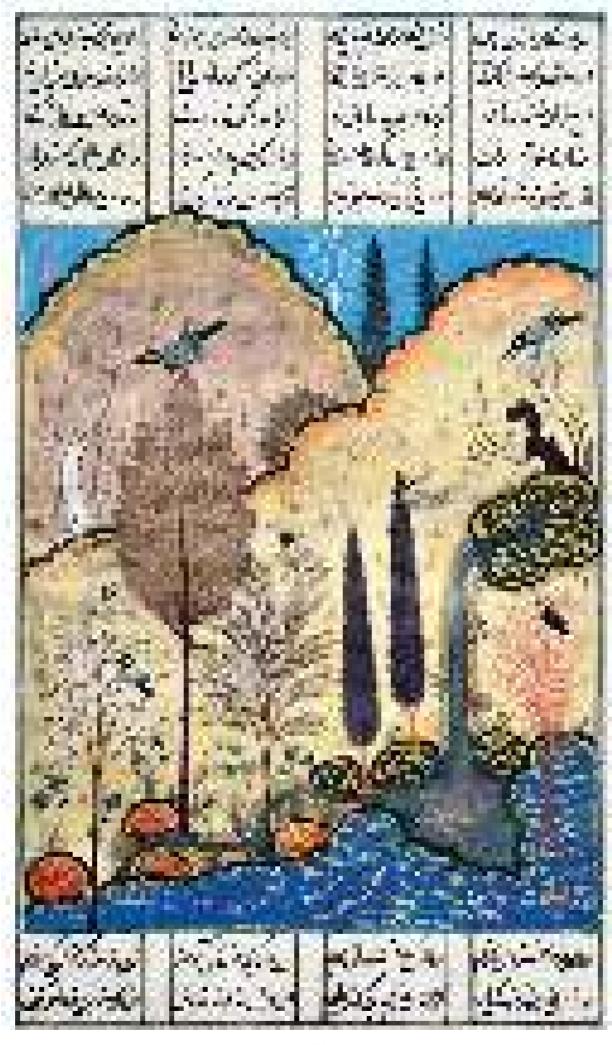
Mahan's story. The owner of a heavenly garden on a riverbank attacks

Mahan with a stick, suspecting he is a thief.

(Rare illustration)

270





f. 682.

Trees on the bank of a stream.

Blossoming trees line the slope of a hill washed by silvery waters. Birds sit on the branches. Restrained coloration: dull-blue, beige and silver, animated somewhat by hints of pink and gold.



In completing this overview of the key stylistic groups represented by the *Khamsa* manuscripts in the Topkapı collection, we are pleased to share valuable information about its establishment in the following excerpts from Lale Uluç's article, *Ottoman Book Collectors and Illustrated Sixteenth Century*

"Any man of power or one holding a government position considered himself

Shiraz Manuscripts.

obliged to have a library of his own", wrote Ibn Sa'id in tenth-century Cordoba" (P. de Gayangos, 1840, p.139). Bibliophilia was an asset not just for the Umayyads of Spain but for all elite Islamic bureaucrats. Because of the special place of the Quran in Muslim societies, the written word was valued from the beginning of Islam. Books were considered a sign of culture and power. Libraries served as war prizes and books as diplomatic presents. Multiplication of copies of the Qur'an led to a prosperous book trade and book agents acted as intermediaries in obtaining collectors' items for resale to book lovers (G. Bosch et al., 1981, pp. 4-19). In tenth century, Cordoba, the Umayyad ruler al-Hakim II collected books through agents all over the world (P. de Gayangos, 1840, p.140)."

"Throughout the Ottoman period, book collecting was not solely a royal prerogative; Ottoman private collectors belonged not only to the highest military class (askeri sinif) which was at the top of the Ottoman social hierarchy or they were members of the judiciary (ulema). For the Ottoman elite, owning richly illuminated and illustrated manuscripts was a sign of wealth and culture. Books were read, enjoyed, exchanged as valuable gifts, and bought and sold by large number of Ottoman literati."

"Shiraz manuscripts constitute almost half of the total number of illustrated sixteenth century Persian holdings in this collection and are the largest group of manuscripts from a single production centre. The inscriptional evidence provides an insight into the identity of Ottoman collectors and shows that Shiraz manuscripts were desirable collectors' items for the Ottoman palace. Additionally, the group as a whole shows the types of Persian books, which were most readily available to Ottoman collectors."

"There was an Ottoman market for Persian luxury manuscripts in the sixteenth century and that this market was largely supplied by Shiraz manuscripts. Moreover, it shows that the Ottoman market may have led to an increase in the production of higher quality Shiraz manuscripts... Especially during the periods of increased Ottoman-Safavid contact due to military conflicts between the two states between 1534–1555 and 1578–1590."

"Ottoman bureaucrat-intellectuals were avid collectors of Persian literature."

"A sixteenth century account book cites two copies of the *Khamsa* of Nizami which were bought for fifty gold sovereigns each from the estate of Sah Sultan, the daughter of Selim I and sister of Süleyman the Magnificent (TPMA D.34, fol.35r). The date of the document shows that they must have been bought for the palace on 3 Ramadan 985 /24 November 1577 at the time of her death (F. Çağman, 1993, p. 229). Books were also purchased from the libraries of private individuals, possibly after their demise."

"One of the most important bodies of documents found in the palace archives is the large number of *muhallefat* records. Although *muhallefat* means inheritance, the term also referred to the acquisition of confiscated property."



Ð







"These documents list the items from the estates of formerly important bureaucrats and military commanders who had habitually made their fortunes through their royal or official connections; their estates were often confiscated by the state upon their death."

"There are also archival inventories of thousands of books which came to the royal treasury from unidentified sources."

"Books were habitually used as diplomatic gifts presented by Safavid embassies to the Ottoman domain. Ottoman written sources mention at least twenty-seven Safavid embassies that reached the Ottoman sultan between the years 1514–1600. Additionally, Safavid envoys were sent to the Ottoman Eastern headquarters (Iskandar Munshi, 1979, p. 385; B. Kütükoğlu, 1962, pp. 110-113). Some of the sources explicitly record the presence of gifts although book names are mentioned only rarely."

"In Ottoman manuscript illustrations of Safavid envoys, the presentation of books is often prominently represented. The reception by Selim II of the Safavid ambassador, Şah Quli Khan, was depicted in both the *Nüzhet (el-esrar) el-Akhbar der sefer-i Sigetvar* by Ahmed Feridun Paşa and the *Şahname-i Selim Khan* by Seyyid Lokman".

"The first volume of "Şahinşahname" by Seyyid Lokman contains a depiction of the presentation of gifts in 1576 by Şah Tahmasp's ambassador, Toqmaq Khan, when he reached the Ottoman capital after the accession of Murad III in 1574 (Istanbul University Library F.1404, fols.41v and 42r) (N. Atasoy and F. Çağman, 1974, pl.18)".

"In the second volume of "Şahinşahname" by Seyyid Lokman, there is a miniature showing the presentation of gifts by another Safavi ambassador, Ibrahim Khan, on the occasion of the circumcision festival of Şehzade

Mehmed in 1582 (TPML B.200, fols.36v and 37r). Here, large books are held by men at the head of the presentation group. An account of the festivities lists some of the presents received by the sultan, his son and his family, not only from the Safavid shah and the crown prince, but also from various Safavid princes, princesses, the Safavid ambassador himself and some of the Ottoman vezirs (O. Ş. Gökyay, 1986, p. 31-39). It records eighteen books as having been sent by the Safavid *Şah* Muhammad Khudabanda and the crown prince, Hamza Mirza. However, only ten titles are enumerated in the list, confirming the fact that not all books, which were given as gifts, were necessarily mentioned by chronicles."

"The "Kitab-i Ganjina-i Fath-i Ganja" by Ibrahim Cavus describes the conquests of Farhad Paşa, the Ottoman commander of the eastern forces at the time of the second Ottoman-Safavi peace in 1590 (R.1296, fols.42-54) (İ. H. Danişmend, 1947, III\117). A Safavid prince, Haidar Mirza b. Hamza-Mirza b. Muhammad Khudabanda, was sent to the Ottomans as a hostage for peace at the suggestion of Ferhad Paşa (İ. H. Danişmend, 1947, III\100-102; B Kütükoğlu, 1962, pp. 187-195; Iskandar Munshi, 1979, pp. 479-483, 587 and 612). The "Kitab-i Ganjina-i Fath-i Ganja" gives extensive coverage to this extremely important event and contains a list of presents brought by the Safavid peace delegation, the first eighteen items of which are books. They were presented by Haidar Mirza, who is illustrated three times in the manuscript (R.1296, folios: 46r, 48v and 53r). First, he is shown before Şah Abbas I and lastly, before the Ottoman Sultan Murad III. Between these two, he is shown at the banquet given in his honour at Erzurum by Ferhad Paşa who met the Safavid peace delegation there and escorted the group to Istanbul. Ferhad Paşa may also have received gifts from Safavid prince.

Ferhad Paşa was later executed by imperial decree and his estate devolved to the state."

"Throughout the sixteenth century, various Safavid princes and officials defected to the Ottomans. They also seem to have used luxury manuscripts as gifts".

"The Persian holdings of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library corroborate the evidence of approximately two hundred sixteenth century illustrated Persian manuscripts (F. E. Karatay, 1961; F. Çağman and Z. Tanındı). Almost half of these were produced in Shiraz... Sixty percent of the total number of this group are from Shiraz workshops."

"An analysis of the inscriptional evidence found on Shiraz manuscripts in the Topkapı collection proves that sixteenth century Shiraz manuscripts were owned by both the Ottoman elite and members of the Ottoman royal family, that they were used as gifts both by the Safavid delegations and Ottoman officials and that they were considered worthy of being both confiscated and bought for the palace."

"Two copies of the *Khamsa* (H.758 and H.755) of Nizami dated 945–947 AH/1538–1540 AD and 947 AH/1540 AD have the inscription "the late (*Merhume*) Şah Sultan" on their back flyleaves. As mentioned above, Shah Sultan was the daughter of Selim I and sister of Süleyman the Magnificent. These two copies of the *Khamsa* of Nizami therefore provide a significant example of the correlation that can be established between archival documentation and an identifiable name found on manuscripts since they were the two copies of the *Khamsa* of Nizami that were bought for fifty gold sovereigns each from her estate as cited by the account book. Moreover, they constitute an example of Shiraz manuscripts that were bought for the palace."

"The sizable library of Damad İbrahim Paşa, another grand vezir and son-in-low of Ahmed III, was also confiscated."

"Damad İbrahim Paşa's confiscation register lists almost nine hundred books, including a number of Persian works."

"A *Khamsa* of Nizami dated 918 AH/1512–13 AD bears the round seal of İbrahim Paşa (d.1536), the brother-in law and grand vezir of Süleyman the Magnificent (H.770). They must have devolved to the state as part of his estate which was confiscated after his execution in 942 AH/1535 AD (i. H. Danişmend, 1947, III\183)."

"Sinan Paşa was the grand vezir during the 1582 circumcision festival of Şehzade Mehmed and was recorded in the gift lists as having presented the prince with a copy of the *Kulliyat* of Sa'di dated 978 h./1570–71 and a *Khamsa* of Nizami dated 980 h./1560–61 are among the books which carry his name and may very well be the books which he presented to the prince in 1582 (TPML R.924 and TPML H.780). The same Sinan Paşa was executed by an imperial decree in 1004 AH\1596 AD and his considerable estate devolved to the state (M. Selaniki, 1989, p. 585; İ. H. Danişmend, 1947, III/163)."

"A copy of the *Khamsa* of Nizami from *circa* 1585 with the flyleaf note "the estate of the grand vezir Mustafa Paşa" (TPML A.3559). The grand vezir Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Paşa was executed in the year 1094 AH/1683 AD. This note, dated to the next year, indicates that his estate was confiscated after his death in 1684."

"Three additional manuscripts bear the name of another seventeenth century Ottoman official, the *Darüssade ağası* Beşir Ağa (alive in 1635). The earliest one is a *Khamsa* of Nizami dated 934 AH/1528 AD (TPML



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R.871). It bears the flyleaf note: "this is one of the books of *Darüssade ağası* Beşir Ağa."

"After the first Ottoman-Safavid battle at Çaldıran in 1514, Persian illustrated manuscripts started reaching Ottoman court circles in large numbers. At first, they represented booty, but were later on sent as diplomatic gifts or were purchased by Ottoman officials. The influx of Persian manuscripts was maintained for the rest century and appears to have intensified during the two periods of active conflict: the Easter campaigns of Süleyman the Magnificent which started in 1534 and ended with the Amasya peace of 1555, and the twelve-year Ottoman-Safavid war from 1578 till 1590 during the reign of Murad III."

"The above survey indicates that Persian luxury manuscripts were highly valued by Ottoman book collectors and bureaucrats because they could be owned or used as gifts, sometimes to the sultan himself. On the other hand, Ottoman luxury manuscripts were produced at palace workshops and seem to have been almost exclusively for the sultans. Works of the Persian classical authors like Ferdowsi, Nizami, Sa'di, Jami, Hafiz, Dehlavi and Assar do not appear to have been produced in Istanbul at all. There are a small number of extant manuscripts of some authors' works which contain Ottoman illustrations, but these all appear to have been unfinished Persian manuscripts which were then given illustrations by Ottoman artists after they had reached Ottoman territories (N. M. Titley, 1981, 63, cat.no.55A, figs. 43 and 44; N. M. Titley, 1984, pl.23)."

"The comparative numbers of sixteenth century copies of Persian classics from Topkapı collection indicate that the increased demand for high quality Persian illustrated books during the periods of increased Ottoman-Safavid contacts of the sixteenth century was largely met by prolific manuscript production of the Shiraz workshops. The number of illustrated Shiraz manuscripts found in Turkish libraries implies that book agents may have organized the resale of Shirazi manuscripts both in the Eastern border towns and in Istanbul."

"The influx of Shiraz manuscripts into the Ottoman territories slowed down after the second Ottoman-Safavid peace of 1590 and stopped by the end of the sixteenth century. None of the illustrated Shiraz manuscripts found in Istanbul libraries is dated later than 1602. The next year marks the beginning of the military successes of the Safavids and the retreat of the Ottoman armies at the Eastern border".

toman-Safavid interaction due to war was, paradoxically, a cultural development. The royal workshops in the Ottoman capital may have provided the reigning sultan with the type of books that he required, but Shiraz seems to have been the principal provider of copies of works composed by the sought-after Persia poets and writers. The wars provided the means by which the Ottoman elite acquired the luxury manuscripts, which they desired, and the Shirazi workshops with a notably increased demand for their finest quality manuscripts."

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The *Khamsa* of Nizami: Manuscripts in the National Library of Russia

OLGA VASILYEVA

HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION

he Imperial Public Library (now the National Library of Russia) was founded in St. Petersburg in 1795. Since then, its Manuscript Department has been continuously replenished and now has in stock ca. 430,000 items in Russian, Slavic, Greek, Western European and Oriental languages (РНБ 1995; РНБ 2014; Васильева 2005а; Васильева 2005b). Among the 28,000 Oriental manuscripts, 24 represent Nizami Ganjavi's works in copies from the 14th-19th centuries, of which 16 are illustrated by a total of 378 miniatures. "The Quintet" (Panj Ganj or Khamsa) is presented in full in 14 copies, with individual poems from it in the remaining 10. These books were acquired in many different ways: from diplomats, orientalists, private collectors, as well as war trophies and diplomatic gifts.

Nizami's first two manuscripts, *The Treasury of Mysteries* dated 936 / 1529–1530 (reference number: Dorn 349) and *Khosrow and Shirin* dated 1189 / 1775 (Dorn 348), were acquired in 1805 as part of the collection of Peter Petrovich Dubrovsky (1754–1816), secretary of the Russian Embassy in France (Васильева-Ришар, 2005). Featuring 15,000 documents and autographs of famous people, 700 Western European codices, 50 Old Russian and 20 Greek handwritten books and 150 man-

uscripts of oriental origin, his collection formed the basis of the first structural division of the Library, the "Depôt des manuscrits" (the Manuscripts Department).

The year 1828 saw the acquisition of the most valuable Islamic manuscripts, 11 copies of Nizami's works in particular; they were taken to St. Petersburg from Ardabil following the war between the Russian Empire and Qajar Iran. Ardabil, an ancient Azerbaijani town, now in north-west Iran, was the last resting place of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ishaq Ardabili (1252-1334), leader of the Safaviyya Sufi order and founder of the Safavid dynasty. His tomb had always been revered by believers, and when this Turkic-speaking dynasty of Shiite Muslims rose to power in Iran in 1501, the mausoleum was gradually made into a complex of beautiful buildings (Canby 2009, pp. 116-120). In one of them, called the Chinikhana, the library was located alongside precious items of Chinese porcelain. According to a 1759 inventory, the library contained about one thousand manuscripts, but only some of this collection has survived to the present. It has been discovered that 100 hand-written books from Ardabil are kept in the Iran Bastan Museum (National Museum of Iran, Tehran). Four other Ardabil manuscripts are also kept in Tehran (in the National Library and Archive of Iran, the Malek Library and Museum, and the Library









of Golestan Palace); and there are three in Istanbul (in the Museum of Turkish and Muslim Art, Topkapı Saray Museum and Istanbul University Library). There are two Ardabil manuscripts in USA museums (the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington and the Metropolitan Museum in New York), one in the National Library of France, one in the Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon (Portugal), and one in M. Slim's private collection in Lahore (Pakistan) (Akimushkin 2004).

The largest collection of Ardabil manuscripts ended up in St. Petersburg: it comprised 166 copies of literary and historical works, with calligraphy, ornamentation and often illustrated by miniatures. The history of their acquisition is as follows (Борщевский 1984): the war between the Russian Empire and Qajar Iran broke out in 1826 and it was almost over by the end of 1827. However, peace negotiations dragged on and Tsar Nicholas I ordered his troops to take Ardabil and Maragha. On 25 January 1828 Ardabil was occupied by Russian troops under the command of Lieutenant-General Pavel Petrovich Suchtelen. Since Nicholas I's penchant for Oriental manuscripts was widely known, General Suchtelen (incidentally the son of General Peter Kornilevich Suchtelen, a famous bibliophile and Russian Ambassador to Sweden) persevered in persuading "the people supervising the mosque" to give away part of the library. When the books were packed into boxes, Suchtelen laid a brocade sack containing 800 golden coins on Sheikh Safi's tomb; he also presented various gifts to the mausoleum, including 50 gold coins for repairs to the mosque. Since one golden coin (a Dutch guilder in Russian coinage) weighed 3.5 grams, the keepers of mausoleum received over three kilograms of solid gold.

In December 1828, Nicholas I ordered that the remarkable trophies, 11 Arabic, 7 Turkic and 148 Persian manuscripts, be handed over to the Imperial Public Li-

brary (Васильева 2014). Academician C. D. Frähn [Christian Martin Joachim Frähn] together with Professors François Bernard Charmoy and Mirza Jafar Topchubashev compiled a hand-written catalogue in the French language; its descriptions were included in the printed catalogue (Dorn (ed.) 1852), with cardinal numbers becoming their codes in the Main Collection of Oriental Manuscripts. Manuscripts acquired after the publication of this catalogue were recorded in the Library's printed reports or in periodicals; later on, they were split into new series by language. The code PNS (Persian New Series) is a result of this work. (All Persian manuscripts are described in: Костыгова 1988). "The Quintet" (Khamsa) of Nizami is represented in 8 of them (Dorn 337, Cat. No. 1; Dorn 338, Cat. No. 2; Dorn 339; Dorn 340, Cat. No. 4; Dorn 341, Dorn 342, Dorn 343, Dorn 345); 3 more manuscripts presented one poem each: Sharafnameh (the first part of *Iskandarnameh*, Dorn 344, Cat. No. 7), Khosrow and Shirin (Dorn 346) and Leyli and Majnun (Dorn 416, fol. 194v-256). All had been donated to the Ardabil shrine by Shah Abbas I in the early 17th century.

Brought from Erzurum, the copy of Nizami's *Iskan-darnameh* (Dorn 347) was added to the library at the same time - among trophies from the Russo-Turkish [Ottoman] war of 1828–1829.

The *Khamsa* (PNS 83, Cat. No. 3) and *Iskandarnameh* (PNS 84) were received in 1859 as part of the collection belonging to Dmitriy Ivanovich Dolgorukov (1797–1867), who served as the Russian Plenipotentiary Minister at the Qajar court from 1845 to 1854. The seal with a Persian legend bears the name of the owner's daughter, Eugenia. During his service in Qajar Iran, Dolgorukov assembled a remarkable collection of 99 handwritten books which were later procured for the Imperial Public Library pursuant to Alexander II's royal will (Сборник 1920, pp.1-4; Костыгова 1982).



A year earlier, the collection of the German Orientalist Franz von Erdmann, who was at one time a professor at the University of Kazan, was acquired from his heirs; it included the *Khamsa* (PNS 105, Cat. No. 5) and the poem *Haft Paykar* (PNS 245).

Subsequent acquisitions in the 20th century were much more modest. As for copies of Nizami's works, only five were acquired. The 15th century *Khamsa* (PNS 370) was received in 1903 as a gift from Bogdan Veniaminovich Gey of the newspaper *Novoye Vremya*. In 1913, Nicholas II handed over the collection presented to him by the Emir of Bukhara Alim Khan (ruled 1910–1920) on the 300th anniversary of the House of Romanov; the collection included a *Khamsa* (PNS 272, Cat. No. 6) and *Khosrow and Shirin* (PNS 306 Cat. No. 9) (Костыгова 1978). In 1950, the library acquired a *Haft Paykar* (PNS 412), and a manuscript containing three poems from the *Khamsa* (PNS 552) was purchased in 1994.

The manuscripts of the National Library of Russia were repeatedly studied by such researchers as G. A. Pugachenkova, O. I. Galerkina, A. A. Ivanov and O. F. Akimushkin, M. Ashrafi, Z. Rahimova and, in particular, K. Karimov, L. N. Dodkhudoyeva and F. Suleymanova, whose works brought fame to the miniatures illustrating the plots of Nizami's poems. However, the study of these examples of book artwork is not limited to publishing miniatures and attributing them to a particular school. A manuscript also includes the calligraphy of both famous and unknown masters, examples of decorative ornamentation (frontispiece, initial headpieces ('unvans), coloured ornamental margins), and artistic bindings (embossed with gold, lacquered and one was even covered with velvet cloth).

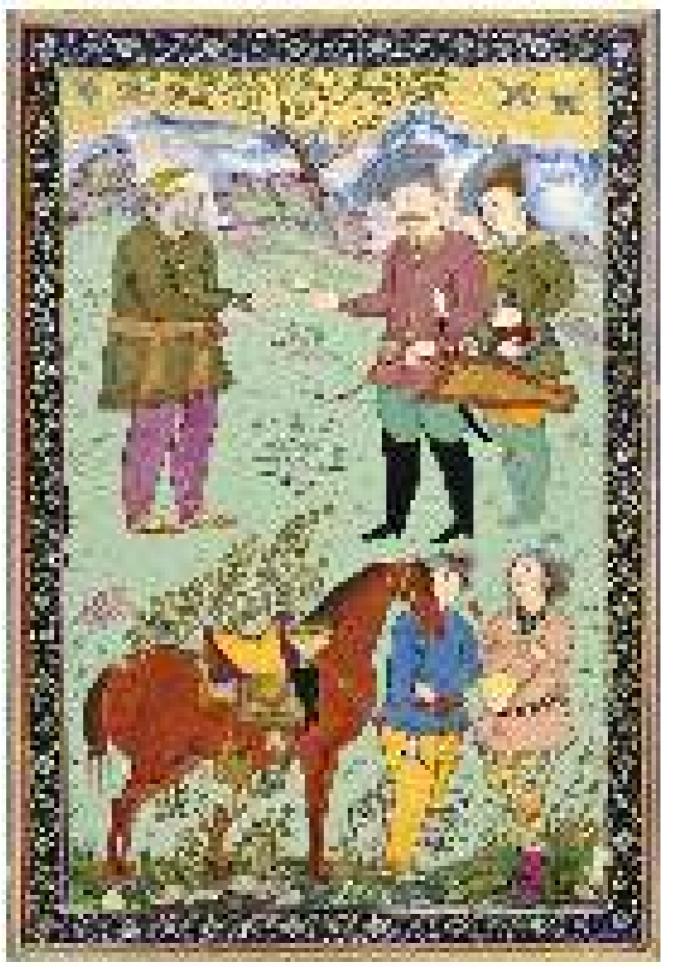


Fig. 1. Shah Abbas and Khan Alam. By Riza Abbasi. 17 Rajab 1042/28 January 1633. (Possibly a copy) (NLR, Dorn 489, f. 74)







The Book Arts

The complex of manuscripts of Nizami's works in the National Library of Russia provides an insight to the high art of book decoration in different localities, including: Shiraz, Herat, Tabriz, Qazvin, Bukhara and Kashmir, as well as in different periods between the 14th and 17th centuries (Baсильева-Ястребова 2018; http://expositions.nlr.ru/ex_manus/nizami/).

One of the 24 manuscripts is from the 14th century, six from the 15th century, twelve from the 16th century, two from the 17th century, two from the 18th century, and one is from the 19th century. Not all of them satisfy the high requirements of art, nor will all be discussed. However, we cannot but mention the earliest Khamsa (Dorn 345; fig.2), which, from analysis of all its properties:

spelling, paper, handwriting style etc. is dated to the second half of the 14th century and may be attributed to the Shiraz school. The copy is incomplete, for it lacks the first poem, "Makhzan al-Asrar" (The Treasury of Mysteries) and half of the poem Khosrow and Shirin. There is no decoration in the book, although space was allocated for large-scale frontispieces, as well as for miniatures; rectangles have been drawn with blue or red ink on many folios in the central columns, setting the layout. The text on the page is placed in four columns, which is typical of large poetic forms. The script is early nasta'liq, which would subsequently be improved and become the main script for the copying of poetry.



2nd half of the 14th century, Shiraz. (NLR, Dorn 345)

Three small format copies of the Khamsa can

be dated back to the second quarter of the 15th century. The smallest of them (Dorn 339; fig. 3-6) is decorated with a frontispiece (only the left side has survived) and five initial headpieces with attributes of the Shiraz design school (Wright 2012, pp.73, 76, 112), harmonized also with the layout of text in a central rectangle and on the margins with lines written diagonally. In this case, the margins contain the first and last poems (The Treasury of Mysteries and Iskandarnameh), which are not illustrated. 30 miniatures (measured 57 x 44 mm) for the other three poems are placed centrally on the page, sometimes extending to the margins. The miniatures were painted by different artists and may be attributed to different periods and styles, but with no certainty as yet. Karim Karimov, a famous connoisseur of Nizami's manuscripts, places the miniatures he has published

with the Herat School (Керимов 1983, il. 19, 39, 41, 44, 59, 65, 68, 88), but L. N. Dodkhudoyeva maintains that they belong to the Isfahan School (Додхудоева 1985, p. 313, fig. 3). In her opinion, these illustrations were produced by three different artists: the first one from the 1430s-1440s, most probably from Isfahan, the second one (a miniature to the poem *The Seven* Beauties) from the final decades of the 15th century in Isfahan, and the third from a similar time in either Shiraz or Isfahan (Додхудоева 1979). There are some attributes of the Yazd School in the presentation of landscape, and of the Shiraz School in the depiction of soldiers' and horses' equipment (see below). It seems that some miniatures were drawn almost simultaneously with the copying and ornamentation, probably in the 1430s-1440s, but a thorough study of the whole complex of illustrations will take some time (Advice from Adel Adamova and Francis Richard has convinced us that localizing and dating the miniatures in this

Khamsa is quite difficult).



Fig.3. Left side of a double-frontispiece. 2nd quarter of the 15th century. (NLR, Dorn 339, f. 1)



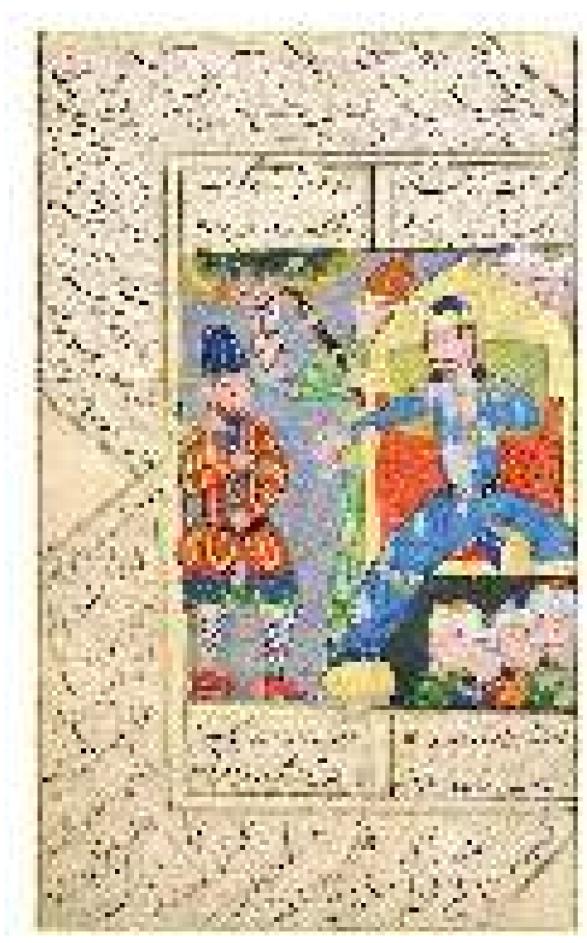


Fig.4. The dispute between Khosrow and Farhad. 2nd quarter of the 15th century. (NLR, Dorn 339, f. 122)



Fig.5. Shirin receives wedding gifts.
End of the 15th century.
(NLR, Dorn 339, f. 205)



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Fig.6. Nawfal's battle against Leyli's tribe. 1430s–1440s. (NLR, Dorn 339, ff. 318-319)

The second Khamsa (PNS 370, fig.7-8) indicates the date it was refurbished, when gaps were filled (AH Rajab-Dhu'l-Qa'da 1211 / December 1796 - May 1797 CE), but it was most likely copied and illustrated in the 1420s-1430s in Shiraz. However, 2 of the 12 miniatures can be correlated with illustrations from the previous manuscript. For example, the battle scenes in both copies are similar in many details: dark colours; the diagonal arrangement of composition extending into the margins; they are similarly densely populated; and horses and riders are depicted in similar manner. They are united in their expression and movement, in contrast with the other static and unequivocally Shiraz-style miniatures in both this and the next Khamsa.



Fig.7. Bahram's Battle with the army of the Chinese Khagan. 1430s-1440s. (NLR, PNS 370, f. 193v)





Fig.8. Conversation between Khosrow and Shirin before her castle.
1420–1430s, Shiraz.
(NLR, PNS 370, f. 81)



Fig.9. Fitnah lifts the calf. 1430–1440s, Shiraz. (NLR, Dorn 343, f. 179v)

Fig.10. The death of Darius. 1430–1440s, Shiraz. (NLR, Dorn 343, f. 248)



Fig.11. Doublure of the binding. 893/1487–1488. Bound by Fununi Sahhaf. (NLR, Dorn 343)





Fig. 12. Shamsa. 1430s–1440s, Shiraz. (NLR, Dorn 343, f. 1)

Front cover, inner.

The third Khamsa (Dorn 343, fig. 9-12) is decorated with a rosette (shamsa), 6 headpieces ('unvans), and 11 miniatures, which bear a significant resemblance to the illustrations in both the previous manuscript and the Nizami Khamsa of 1439 held in the University of Uppsala (Sweden). All 52 miniatures on the Uppsala copy were published and investigated by Karin Ådahl, who succeeded in proving their affiliation to the Shiraz school (Ådahl 1981). The illustrations in both the Uppsala and the St. Petersburg copies are distinguished by their terse expression and colours. They exhibit similar features in the presentation of landscape (the contours of mountains, clouds and trees); this similarity continues in architectural detail, as well as in figures elongated in the upper part of the body, the characters' oval faces and the specific shape of the headwear: turbans, caps, crowns and women's scarves. It is clear that the miniatures in the St. Petersburg Khamsa (Dorn 343) were corrected later: the birds in the trees and curls were painted with black paint or ink.

Of great interest is the leather cover of a later period, stamped with the date 893/1487–1488 and the bookbinder's name, Fununi *sahhaf* [the name given to someone who is engaged in the book and paper trade] (Yastrebova 2017). The outer covers are decorated identically: the central space has an 'embossed miniature', depicting animals and birds in the woods. There are verses in rectangular cartouches of the frame, and vegetal ornamentation in the corners. Despite considerable chafing, the original gilding of the whole embossed surface is still evident. This type of binding with a gold embossed miniature is typical of the second half of the 16th century, but the impress on them is more prominent; embossed elements are usually prominent *per se* (cf. the binding

on Dorn 347), whereas here the eyes, feathers, petals and other details appear to have been scratched through. Moreover, the framed kinds of ornaments. The decoration on the doublures of this *Khamsa* raises no doubts about the dating: they are decorated differently, which is not uncommon for the late 15th century. In any event, a signed and dated cover is quite rare.

The next three manuscripts from the last quarter of the 15th century are dated accurately. Copying the earliest one (Dorn 337, Cat. No. 1) was complete by 26 Sha'ban 884/12 November 1479 and it was illustrated with 18 miniatures, which most researchers attribute to the Shiraz School. Fazila Suleymanova, however, pointed out that this very copy is quite similar to another that was written in the same period (5 Dhu'l-Hijja 886/25 January 1482) in Herat (Dorn 338, Cat. No. 2) by the calligrapher Darvish Muhammad Taki, a student of the famous Herat master Sultan Ali Mashhadi (The website of the National Library and Archives of Iran provides information on 7 manuscripts created with Darvish Muhammad Taki's involvement from 883-909/1478-1504; among them Alisher Navoi's Kulliyat with author's corrections, now in the Topkapı Saray Museum in Istanbul (R. 808) and the Majalis al-'Ushshaq of Husayn ibn Ismayil Tabasi Gazurgahi with 80 miniatures. H.1086.). Comparing the miniatures, Suleymanova concluded that the first manuscript had been illustrated by a native of Shiraz working in Herat. Whatever the case, some miniatures in these copies are really very similar to each other; for example, the Khosrow sees Shirin bathing. However, the inner illumination of the first manuscript (a double frontispiece with a shamsa centrepiece and paired medallions, followed by a double frontispiece which includes the beginning of the text and unvan headpieces) cannot be attributed to the works of Herati illuminators. However, it is quite possible that









the decoration was done slightly later. Both manuscripts were refurbished in the 1580s, probably in Qazvin: in both cases pages with text were mounted in new margins, and the book received a new binding. From the outside, the covers of both manuscripts, decorated with embossing of varied levels, two-tone gilding and claret red paint are very similar to each other (Vasilyeva 2009).

As far as the 45 miniatures of the Herat copy (Dorn 338) are concerned, it should be added that they were painted by different artists, and the manuscript's interior decoration (*shamsa* rosette and 6 '*unvan* headpieces) definitely bears the impress of the Herat style (Galerkina, 1970).

Another dated copy of the *Khamsa* of the late 15th century (PNS 83, Cat. No. 3) was completed in *Shavval* 896/August–September 1491, probably in Shiraz, which at that time was a part of the Aghqoyunlu state. Many books were created by the Shiraz court workshop in the last quarter of the 15th century, and reflect a high level of skill in their makers and the subtle artistic taste of their customers. Our manuscript is a fine example: it is written in an elegant script (*nasta'liq*) on thick glossy paper, decorated with a double frontispiece, five *'unvan* headpieces and 24 exquisite miniatures, all enclosed in a leather binding with gold embossing.

The inner decoration of the covers and the ornamental decoration of the codex are similar in style to those found in the Shiraz *Khamsa* copied by the calligrapher Abu Turab Mun'im al-Din al-Awhadi on 25 *Dhu'l-Qa'da* 913/27 March 1508 (Dorn 340, Cat. No. 4). However, the miniatures display a significant difference: the figures, colours and compositions here are not similar. The distinguishing feature of the Safavid period, a red *kulah* baton, which rises high above the turban, is also displayed. It is not as thin here as it would be in the later

period, during the reign of the second Safavid shah, Tahmasp I. The book is adorned with a double frontispiece, 6 *'unvan* headpieces, and 22 miniatures.

and individual poems from it are dated to the 16th century. The manuscript dated 936/1529–1530 contains the poem *The Treasury of Mysteries* (Dorn 349, fig.13), whose text is placed in two columns in the centre of the page, and this manuscript is quite interesting for its design. Moreover, on the margins is the poem *A gift to the noble* (*Subhat al-abrar*), which Persian poet Abd ar-Rahman Jami wrote in the 15th century in imitation (*nazira*) and response to Nizami's *The Treasury of Mysteries*. It seems that this fine book was framed and bound in Tabriz during the reign of Shah Tahmasp I, who was a great connoisseur of book art and acquired many a first-class manuscript.

A year after the previous manuscript, the wellknown Herat calligrapher Sultan Muhammad Nur copied the poem Khosrow and Shirin (Dorn 346, fig. 14-15). It is not only the beautiful calligraphy that pleases, but its whole appearance: the decoration, consisting of a double frontispiece, headpieces and multi-coloured margins with golden specks; and the binding. Both outer sides of the black leather binding are covered with an "embossed miniature", in which Majnun is depicted among wild animals. It is quite unlikely that this binding was made specifically for the poem Khosrow and Shirin, as it illustrates the plot from another poem. One can definitely say that the binding and margins were added some time after the book was copied (there are weather stains on the paper with text that do not show on the margins). And yet it is not finished: there are blank pages on which miniatures were supposed to be drawn.

Fig.14. Khosrow and Shirin. Frontispiece. 937/1530–1531, Herat. (NLR, Dorn 346, ff. Iv-2r)



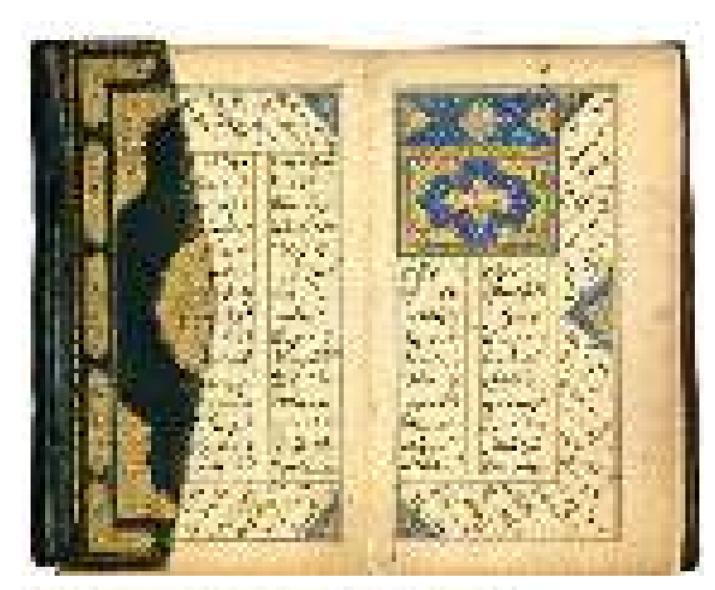


Fig.13. The beginning of the poems, "The Treasury of Mysteries" by Nizami (in the centre) and "A gift to the noble" by Jami (in the margins).
936/1529–1530.
(NLR, Dorn 349. ff. 1v-2r)

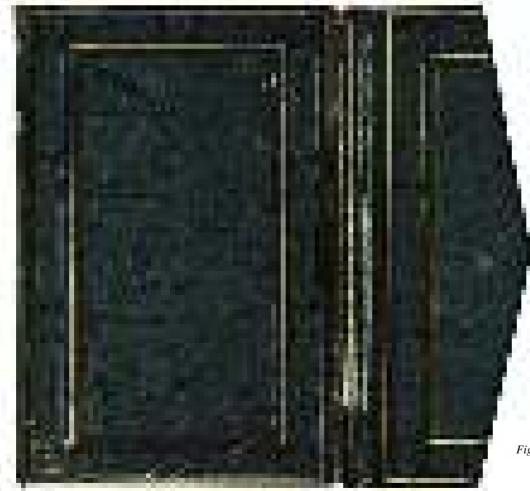


Fig.15. Khosrow and Shirin. Binding. (NLR, Dorn 346)

The next manuscript on this timeline returns us to Shiraz where, in the month of *Safar* 952/April–May 1545, the calligrapher Muhammad Qivam al-Katib al-Shirazi (Uluç 2006, p.184, note 13) finished copying the *Khamsa* (PNS 105, Cat. No. 5), decorated with a frontispiece, 5 *'unvans* and 25 good quality miniatures, somewhat damaged by moisture. Interestingly, the same calligrapher also wrote out two more copies of the *Khamsa*, one of which is in the Topkapı Saray Museum (H.756) in Istanbul and the other in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg (D-212); the second copy is most likely illustrated by the same artist as our manuscript (Додхудоева 1985, p. 299; Ашрафи 1974, pp. 69-70, il. 54-55).

During restoration of the binding, poorly preserved fragments of a gilded leather binding of a later period (1570s–1580s) were used.

The Khorasan School of miniature painting is represented in the Khamsa dated 979/1571-1572 (Dorn 341), which was copied by Ahmad ibn Sultan 'Ali al-Haravi (Haravi means Herati, native of Herat), Muhammad-Amin Abdallah al-Sa'idi, and Muhammad Qasim ibn Shir Ali al-Haravi. There are 6 'unvans, 34 miniatures and multi-coloured margins in the book, disproportionately wide in relation to the size of the text, which was probably dictated by the format of available covers of the binding. The damaged lacquered outer cover is decorated with scenes from the poem Khosrow and Shirin, with two angels depicted on the flap. The doublure is decorated with a standard pattern: central and corner pieces, medallions, cartouche frames, with the filling being a filigree net applied on the blue background of the cardboard base. Its details make this decoration quite similar to that on the inside of the lacquered binding dated 983/1575-1576 on the poem The golden chain by Jami (Dorn 443) (Васильева, 2008, p. 20, il. 21).

The poem *Iskandarnameh* copied by Mir Miran in the month of *Dhu'l-Qa'da* 979/March–April 1572 is illustrated by 10 miniatures of the same period (PNS 84). The pages with text were incorporated into multi-coloured margins with golden specks. The cover of a significantly damaged binding appears to have belonged to another book. Leather surfaces with faded gold embossing and a standard set of exquisite elements, previously located on the inside, are now on the outside. They can definitely be attributed to Shiraz style. On the inside, the covers are decorated with lacquered miniatures depicting courtyard scenes of the post-Tabriz period; initially they were supposed to be on the outside. The back and the edges of the covers were wrapped later in light brown leather.

Decorated with 21 miniatures, the copy of the Khamsa (PNS 272, Cat. No. 6) was completed on 4 Jumada II 987/29 June 1579. There are different opinions as to which school they belong to. In early studies of Central Asian book art from the Leningrad (St. Petersburg) collections, N.V. Diakonova attributed them to the Bukhara school (Дьяконова 1964, р. 13, 26-27, il. 24-29), and many researchers share this opinion. L.N. Dodkhudoyeva, however, has proposed an alternative version: she placed the miniatures with the Isfahan School (Додхудоева 1985, р. 302, № 209). And judging by the costumes, headwear, faces and large, elongated figures, the illustrations of this Khamsa and the gold colour drawing on its last page have little in common with the Bukhara (Mawarannahr) School, but have something in common with Safavid (in particular Khorasan) book art. The book was undoubtedly bound in Bukhara, and small tassels of thread are pasted on the margins of decorated folios, to serve as bookmarks, a feature common to Bukhara manuscripts.







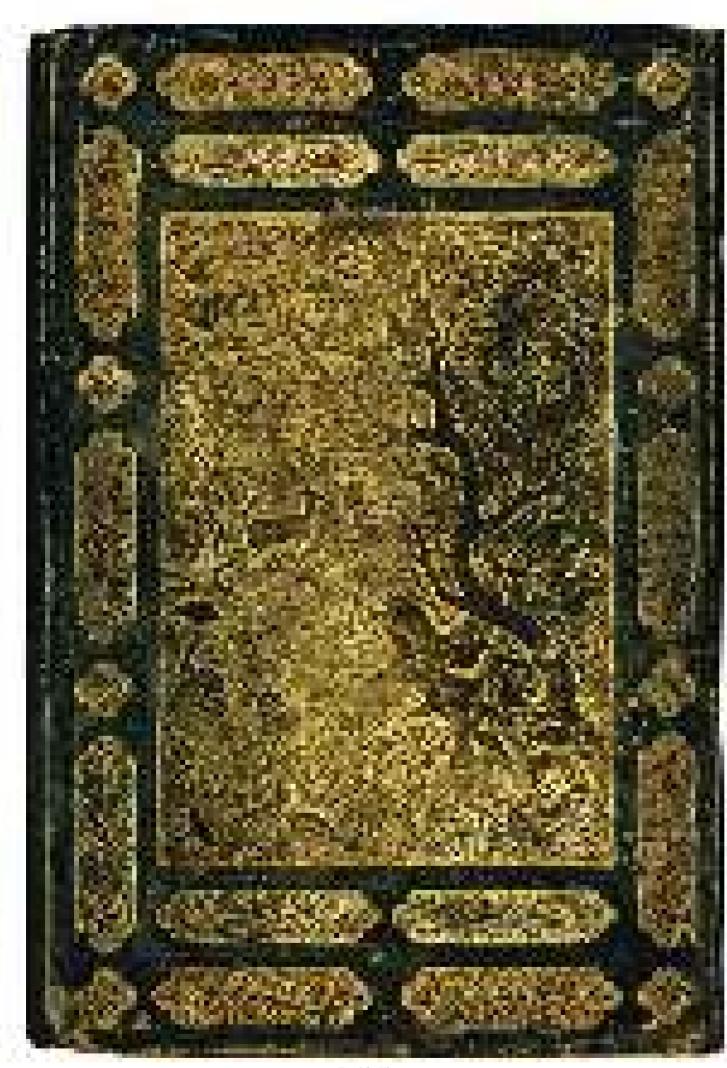


Fig.16. Khamsa. 990/1582. Binding. (NLR, Dorn 347)

The copy of Iskandarnameh dated 990/1582 (Dorn 347, fig.16) is remarkable for its binding, albeit somewhat damaged. The outer covers are decorated with a solid gold embossing, Beasts and birds in the woods.

The following quatrain (ruba'i) is impressed in the cartouches:

This binding, like the mole and down on the face of a beauty of Taraz,

Is indeed a beautiful sight to bring delight to the beholder's eye;

Or it may be the gate to Paradise that from God's generosity

Opens before the one who views this book.

(Translation by O. M. Yastrebova)

The ancient city of Taraz (called Jambul in Soviet times) in the south of present-day Kazakhstan was famous for its beautiful girls. Moles and down on the face are symbols of a veil that conceals meaning. The binding is therefore associated with both a decorated curtain (coverlet), which itself pleases the eye, and with the gates to Paradise that is its true essence.

Meanwhile, an exact analogue of this central embossing can be seen on the binding of Alisher Navoi's works of the late 16th century (Dorn 558), and the name of its creator, Muhammad-Zaman ibn Mirza Bey Tabrizi, was written on the top cover (Казиев1977, р. 147; Loukonine–Ivanov 1996, pp. 174–175; Васильева 2008, р. 21, il. 22–24; Vasilyeva 2009; Vasilyeva 2017, p. 416). The decoration on the doublures of the *Khamsa*, with the central field totally covered by a leather mesh attached to multi-coloured segments, is also a sure sign of work performed by this same bookbinder.

The inner covers of another *Iskandarnameh* (Dorn 344, Cat. No. 7), copied by the famous calligrapher Ahmad al-Husayni (died 1578–1579), are decorated in the same way. On the outside, the leather binding is covered with embossing of varying depth with gilding in two shades: claret red and brown paints were used to highlight some elements of the ornamentation (the same type as on the covers of the two *Khamsa* manuscripts (Dorn 338 and 337). It seems both the binding and the luxurious broad, gold-ornamented coloured margins were made in Qazvin in the 1580s. Meanwhile, L.N. Dodkhudoyeva attributed 9 of the 11 high-quality miniatures to Isfahan, and two (the last diptych) to the Mashhad School.

The Bukhara *Khamsa* (PNS 66, Cat. No. 8), one of whose poems was copied at the beginning of the month *Dhu'l-qa'da* 1058/second half of November 1648, belongs to the 17th century. Upon its admission to the Library, this *Khamsa*, presented to Alexander II by the Emir of Bukhara Muzaffar al-Din, was described by Professor Vasily Dmitrievich Smirnov as follows: "a very fanciful exemplar, although one cannot call it an elegant one".

This "very fanciful exemplar" impresses with its brightness of colour and variety of decorative elements.

Each of the five poems has margins in its own colour: The Treasury of Mysteries has green, Leyli and Majnun has purple, The Seven Beauties yellow, Khosrow and Shirin blue and Iskandarnameh red. These margins enable the reader to open the book at the poem they need, while a quick search of the illustrations is ensured by a technique widespread in Central Asia: small tassels are attached to the margins of the folios with miniatures and headpieces ('unvan). These tassels form a geometric ornament on the edge of the book.

Close examination reveals that the folios with text were exposed to moisture, indicated by slight traces of stain, which do not appear on the coloured margins. That means the damaged margins were cut off and replaced with new, coloured ones. The question arises as to when this restoration was carried out: before or after the ornamentation and illustrations appeared in the book? All the initial 'unvan headpieces are drawn on the new coloured margins, while only one miniature folio shows a stain, but under a layer of paint. It is most likely that the ornamentation and all the miniatures were painted following the restoration and cannot therefore be dated to the year of copying.

This *Khamsa* includes 61 miniatures (Васильева-Ястребова 2020, pp.170-312). O. F. Akimushkin and A. A. Ivanov were apparently the first scholars to attribute them to the Mawarannahr (Bukhara) School, suggesting that the book was illustrated by 7 artists who worked in the court workshop (*kitab-khana*) of the Bukhara Khan Abd al-Aziz (1645–1680) of the Uzbek Janid dynasty (Ashtarkhanids); it was eventually passed down to his brother Subhan-Quli Khan (1681–1702) (Акимушкин-Иванов 1968; Akimuskin-Ivanov 1982. It was N. V. Diakonova who first studied the miniatures (in 1954), although she did not find any reason to include them in her album: Дьяконова 1964).

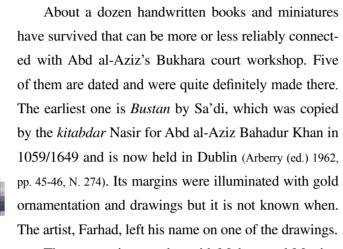


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The same artist, together with Muhammad-Muqim, participated in the work on a Nizami *Khamsa* that was completed in the month of *Ramadan* 1064/June 1656 under the supervision of Khwaja Lutfallah (Porter 1999, pp. 122–123, table III, il. 2–4. The manuscript was auctioned at Christie's on 25 April 1997. Lot no. 64).

Then come two manuscripts created in the time of the *kitabdar* Abd al-Rahman: The Berlin *Khamsa* by Khwaju Kirmani 1078/1667–1668 and the Dublin *Khamsa* of Nizami 1079–1081/1668–1671 (Arberry (ed.) 1962, p. 48, N. 276), copied jointly by Mulla Barqi and Arabshah al-Bukhari. The same calligraphers were working on the Tashkent copy of *Kimiya-yi Sa'adat* ("Alchemy of happiness") by Imam al-Ghazzali in 1088/1677 (there are no miniatures in this book) (CBP IX, p. 400, No. 6581), and they helped Mir Muhammad al-Iraqi to collate the text with its original in "the royal library".

Along with the *kitabdars* and scribes, we know the names of artists who often left their signatures on miniatures, including Farhad, Muhammad-Muqim (who, according to some reports, had the *nisba* Samarkandi), Muhammad-Amin, Behzad, Muhammad-Salim, Avaz-Muhammad, and Gadai-Naqqash. Surprisingly, not a single miniature is signed in our *Khamsa*. In their time, O. F. Akimushkin and A. A. Ivanov attributed

some of the illustrations to Muhammad-Muqim, based on similar stylistic features to those present in his signed works. The researchers later drew attention to the fact that the Bukhara miniatures are heavily influenced by Indian schools, apparent most prominently in Muhammad-Muqim's works. (It is reported that he worked in Kashmir and left for Bukhara during the reign of Shah Jahan, that is, before 1666) (Skelton 1995, pp. 283, 285). "...The high skill of spatial structure using linear perspectives, the free depiction of characters from sophisticated angles" (Αμιραφμ 1974, p. 114), the bright colour range and division of space by colour into three horizontal zones are also noted.

Particularly interesting is the miniature *Majnun by Leyli's tent* (Cat. No. 8/5). Apart from Majnun's figure, which resembles that of an exhausted Indian hermit, it is worth mentioning the background: animals grazing in the distance are considerably reduced in size, thus creating a perspective that is often present in Indian miniatures. But compared with the same theme drawn in the Dublin manuscript of 1668–1671, our miniature does not display so much Indian influence; the main point is that there are almost no naturalistic dimensions, the colours are rarely mixed with other hues, and are applied smoothly.

When comparing the miniatures with other illustrations of the *Khamsa* of 1668–1671 and the drawings in Sa'di's *Bustan* (1649), one can see, for example, that the appearance of Majnun, although similarly executed, has clear differences.

In general, there is a closer similarity with the illustrations of Nizami's *Khamsa* dated 1654–1656 (Porter 1999, table III, ill. 2–4). It seems that the miniatures of our *Khamsa* were produced in the 1650s–1660s, in any case not later than the 1660s, when the "Indian" style became dominant.

During Zukhra Rahimova's studies of women's costumes in miniatures, she noted that they also exhibit Indian influence; this applies to a style of outer clothing that was narrower in the waist, to transparent fabrics with small patterning, and small caps with a thin black aigrette, necklaces in several rows and other features not found in earlier miniatures (Рахимова 2003; Рахимова 2005, pp. 67-69).

At the same time, the Bukhara miniatures' Iranian roots are prominent, which is not surprising, because, from the 16th century, Central Asian masters (including those from Shiite Iran) used Persian books as models. Interestingly, obsolete Iranian details, like belts with buckles, are sometimes still encountered in the miniatures of the 1648 *Khamsa*.

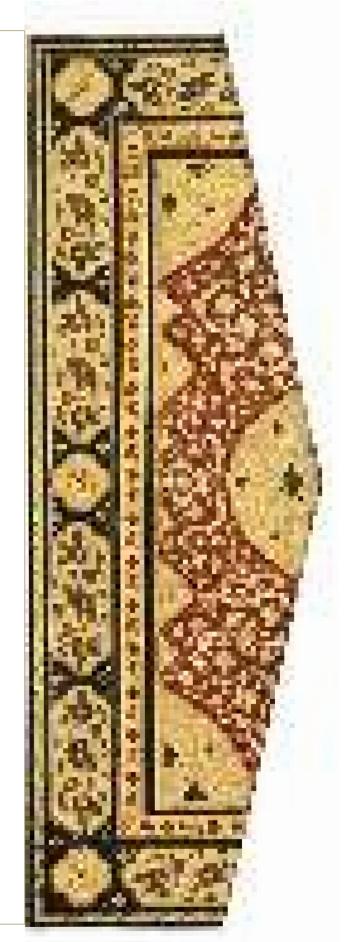
It seems that the miniatures and ornamental illumination were all executed in the 1650s–1660s.

The binding of this *Khamsa* is very unusual. Its doublures are covered with olive green leather and decorated with a delicate leather filigree net attached to the golden background of standard set elements: central and corner pieces, diamond-shaped medallions and a frame of cartouches. This technique is typical of 16th century Iranian bookbinding. Clearly, they did not use old coverings but made new ones based on the old model. They differed from traditional Iranian elements in using green leather instead of brown, and painting the bottom of structural elements only with gold, while Iranian bookbinders often used blue paint there, sometimes adding other colours (green, orange, black). Since the leather bears no sign of the stain that damaged the manuscript in its time, one may date the inner covers to the time the codex was decorated, i.e., the 1650s-1660s.

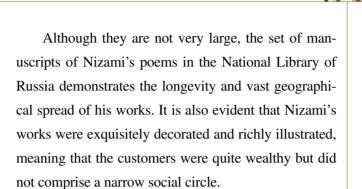
The upper side of the binding was covered with figured velvet, which, was apparently, very rare and of great value, but seldom used to decorate an original binding. Daria Vasilyeva established that the woven female figures were once part of an Iranian velvet cloth of the first half, or middle, of the 17th century, nothing like it has been found in other museums (Васильева Д. 2015). The picture of an extremely complex fabric was created by an artist-designer with Venetian women's portraits in mind. Later on, worn figures were cut from the old textile and pasted onto the new purple velvet, on the covers. This probably happened in the 19th century during restoration, when the covers' edges were reinforced with brown leather, also used to make the spine. The book is enclosed in two silk cases.

One of the two 18th century manuscripts is the poem Khosrow and Shirin bearing the date 1118/1706-1707 (PNS 306, Cat. No. 9) and decorated with a florally-ornamented, lacquered binding and illustrate with 30 miniatures of the Kashmir School (North Indian region) (Адамова-Грек 1976, pp. 44-54, 80, 195-208). Notable is the miniature Mi'raj with flying angels and the horse Buraq ascending; Muhammad, however, is not portrayed. His presence may be indicated by a radiance just above Buraq's back. Similar compositions are found in other Kashmir manuscripts, for example, in Nizami's Leyli and Majnun in the State Hermitage (no hint at all of Muhammad's presence there) (Адамова-Грек 1976, pp.157-158). Khosrow and Shirin was among the gifts from the Bukhara Emir Alim Khan to Nicholas II, along with three works by other authors illustrated in the same style.

The only 19th century book, *Haft Paykar* (PNS 412), also has Kashmir miniatures, although the handwriting is closer to that of the Central Asian region.



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Calligraphers involved in copying could be well-known; among them Darvish Muhammad Taki and Sultan Muhammad Nur of Herat, as well as Ahmad al-Husayni who worked in Mashhad and Qazvin. Miniatures (including those with lacquered covers) and ornamental patterning from different schools are represented: Shiraz, Herat, Tabriz, Khorasan, Isfahan, Bukhara and Kashmir.

It is interesting that seven (or perhaps eight) of the manuscripts were created in Shiraz between the 14th and the 16th centuries. Over those three centuries of almost continuous development of book art in this South Iranian city, many masterpieces and commercial products (Wright 2012; Uluç 2006) were created and flooded the markets of Central Asia and the Middle East, thereby giving impetus to the development and enrichment of traditions established in other centres.

It is quite likely that the large-format binding covers made in Shiraz and abundantly embossed in gold, influenced the work of the famous master Muhammad Zaman Tabrizi and his students who, apparently, were active and working in Qazvin in the 1580s. Their works include four bindings on manuscripts copied at different times, which indicates

the tendency to remodel old but valuable books in line with new aesthetic trends. The enlargement and standardization of the format for binding covers led to the need for another restoration procedure in which old texts were incorporated into new, wider coloured margins, which were also sometimes ornamented.

Thus, the complex of manuscripts of Nizami's works displays, inter alia, many a trend in the development of the Islamic book art.



Catalogue

OLGA YASTREBOVA

I. Nizami. Khamsa (NLR, Dorn 337)

16 Sha'ban 884/9 November 1479, Shiraz.

358 ff., 32.5x20 cm. Laid Oriental paper, sized and polished, cream-coloured. Text in 4 columns, enclosed in 18x10.5 cm frame, 19 lines per page, yellowish margins. Calligraphic *nasta'liq* script. Black ink, headings in gold.

18 miniatures; double frontispiece (ff.1v-2r): a mirror-image composition formed by the central *shamsa* medallion and 2 smaller medallions; text containing formulaic good wishes to the owner of the book inscribed in white ink in the *shamsa*; ff.2v-3r: another double frontispiece with the beginning of *The Treasury of Mysteries*; 4 '*unvan* headpieces; frame drawn with gold and blue paint; headings in frames, with a background of curly vegetal ornamentation with golden leaves; illuminated colophon (f.358).

Leather binding with a flap, outer covers decorated with deep embossing, gold, red and greenish-brown paints. The inners are decorated with openwork leather netting over a multicoloured background.

Gap between f.7 and f.8: a large part of *The Treasury of Mysteries* and the beginning of *Khosrow and Shirin* are missing. During the restoration of the spine, the fly-leaf made of blue Russian paper and bearing the watermark "Coat of arms of Kostroma", dated 1816, was inserted in the end of the manuscript.

On f.1 there is a record of the transfer of the manuscript by Shah Abbas to the *waqf* [an Islamic charitable endowment] of the Sheikh Safi shrine in, dated 1017/1608–1609; the numbers of sheets and miniatures is indicated in the upper left corner. Seal of the Ardabil *waqf*.

Acquisition: Ardabil collection, 1829.

References: Dorn (ed.) 1852, pp. 321-322; Костыгова 1988, p. 147, No. 409; Акимушкин-Иванов 1968, il. 9, 10; Ашрафи 1965, p. 156, il. 4; Додхудоева 1985, pp.128, 147, 158, 176, 181, 195, 198, 209, 210, 219, 232, 237, 244, 260, 268, 273, 278, 283, fig. 6, 7; Керимов 1983, il. 55, 75, 85; Пугаченкова 1963, p. 203; Сулейманова 1985, il. 14-22, II/12-13; Vasilyeva 2009, p. 49, fig. 15, p. 50, fig. 17.

Contents:

ff. 2v-7v - Makhzan al-Asrar (only the beginning);

ff. 8v-89 - *Khosrow and Shirin* (the beginning is missing);

ff. 89v-151 - Leyli and Majnun;

ff. 151v-218 - Haft Paykar;

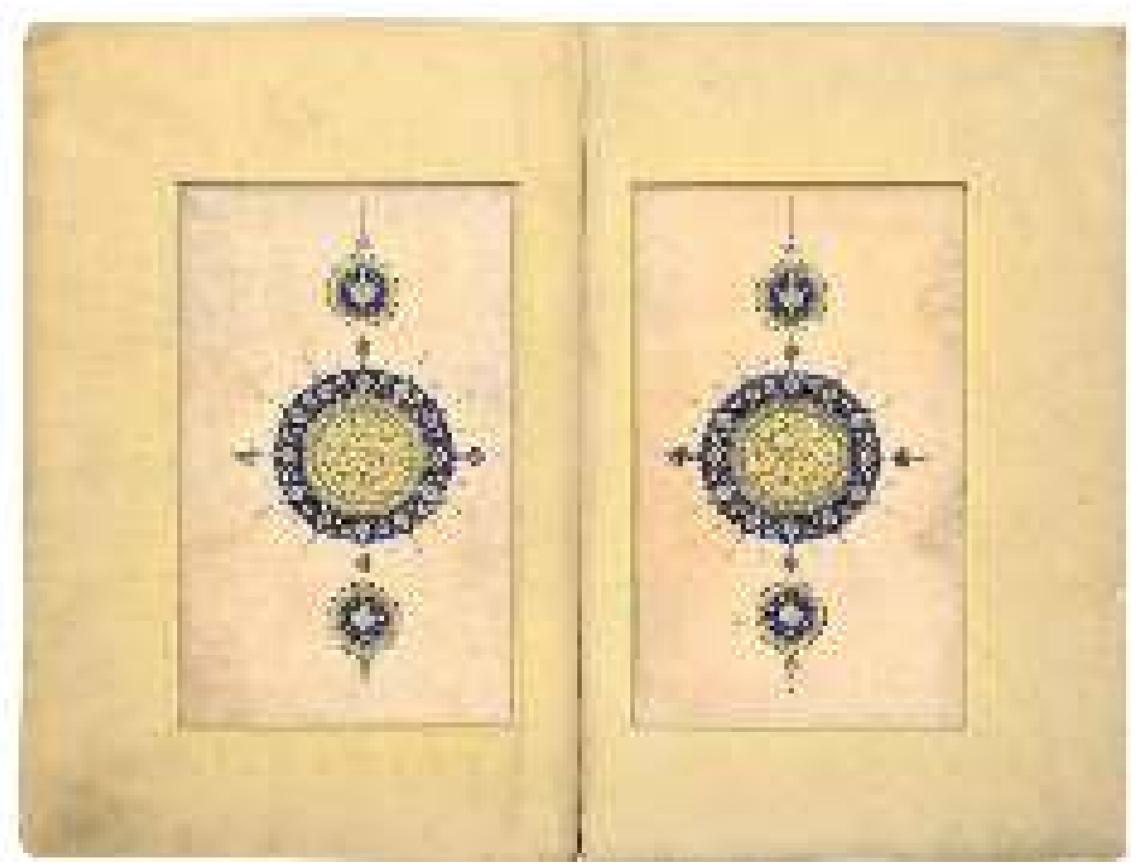
ff. 218v-309 - Sharafnameh;

ff. 309v-358 - Iqbalnameh.









I/1. Double frontispiece. Dorn 337, ff.1v-2r.

1/2. Double frontispiece and the beginning of The Treasury of Mysteries.

Dorn 337, ff.2v-3r.





1/3. Khosrow sees Shirin at the spring. Dorn 337, f.20.

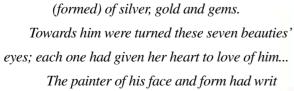
I/3. Shirin and Khosrow were in love with each other from portraits and reports even before they met in person. Shirin, the niece of Barda ruler Mihin-Banu, decides to flee to Madain. After riding a few days without stopping, she rests and bathes in a spring. Meanwhile Khosrow, slandered before his father, flees to the land of Arman. On his way he comes across a girl bathing in a spring.

She was sitting like a flower in indigo-coloured water, an indigo-coloured veil wrapped around her waist.

Combing strands of her hair, she looked like violets falling onto a rose.



above his head the name of Bahram Gur.



A face was limned so handsome in the midst

A parrot on his sugar plumes had dropped, and

His head exalted like a cypress; his crown was

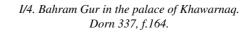
that 'twas as kernel, whilst the rest were shell.

"galia" o'er his moon had drawn a line.

I/4. Bahram Gur lived in the beautiful palace

of Khawarnaq on the bank of the Euphrates and built by the skilled architect Simnar for the Arab king Nu'man; he was brought up at the court of Nu'man's son Munzir. Once, walking through the palace's chambers, he entered a locked room he had never seen before. It was decorated with images of seven beauties from different countries, with a

young man among them:









I/5. Bahram Gur fights with lions. Dorn 337, f.168v.

I/5. When Bahram's father Yazdigard died, the nobles agreed not to inform Bahram, who at that time lived in the court of the Arab king Munzir, and they enthroned one of his distant relatives instead. When he learned about this, Bahram headed to the capital with an army of Arabs. The dispute was resolved by a test: the royal crown was placed between two pillars, to which two lions were tied. Scared, his older rival refused to try to take the crown. Bahram Gur, on the contrary, boldly went to the lions: They made an onslaught like the strong and stout, with daggers in their claws, swords in their teeth, To seize the head of him the crown adorned, reduce the taker of the world to straits. When King (Bahram) resolved to punish them, he threw the heads of both beneath his feet, He tore their claws and broke their teeth, and saved from 'twixt the lions both his head and crown. He crowned himself and sat upon the throne. - Does fortune show such favour (oft to man)?

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I/6. In the Green Dome Bahram lodged Khwarazmian beauty Nazpari, the daughter of the ruler of the third Clime. Dressed in green robes, the king visits her on Monday, and she tells him a story about a righteous and God-fearing dweller of Rum.

When Monday came the king unto the moon upraised his fortune-favoured canopy.

In green resplendent he was bright and gay, like heavenly angels (all in) green (attired).

He set off on his way to the Green Dome, giving his heart to gladness and to joy.

1/6. Bahram Gur in the green dome. Dorn 337, f.187v.





1/7. Iskandar is left alone with a Chinese concubine.

Dorn 337, f.300v.

I/7. Having prevailed over the Rus, Iskandar sets free their king and presents him with many gifts, then feasts and indulges in entertainment outdoors. Nizami describes a beautiful moonlit night, urging the reader not to waste time in vain:

A luminous night more resplendent than the day, A moon more effulgent than a sun:

From the freshness of the glittering (moon-like) dome (of the sky),

The tablet (tilled land) of the children of dust (vegetation) emerald become.

The freshness of the earth is said to be due to the moon's rays.

On that tablet of beauty (the tilled land), the star (the luminous moon) with silver (its effulgent beams),

Wrote many a word of hope (of full harvest) and of fear (of scanty harvest)

To suffer toil in the world's business, - what advantage?

Since it is impossible by endeavour to increase one's daily food.

Not worth care is the world; incline to joy (contented with what thou hast);

Not for care, - have they made this mansion.

(Here and elsewhere the English translation of verses from Sharafnameh, the first part of Iskandarnameh, is given after the edition: Sikandar Nama 1881.)

Iskandar is left alone with a beautiful Chinese concubine:

Both pleased was his heart through the victory over the enemy;

And also prosperous was his house through his wealth (the plunder of Russia).

He summoned the mistress, the heart's ease, The Peri-form of tender limb;

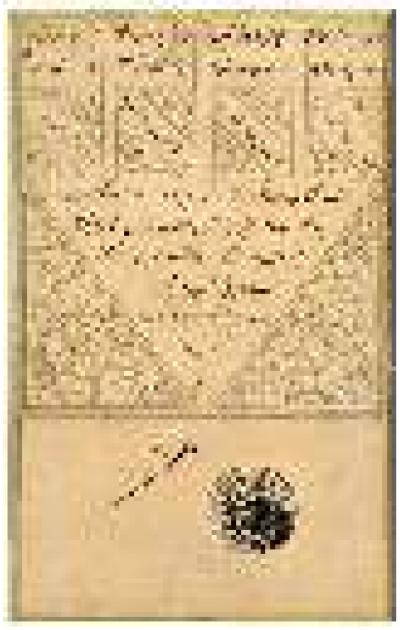
(And) made the tent void of strangers,

Of singers and minstrels belonging to the tent.

The girl sings to the king, and they make love.



The Khamsa of Nizami: Manuscripts in the National Library of Russia







I/9. Bottom cover with flap, outer.

Dorn 337.





I/10. Bottom cover with flap, inner. Dorn 337.

276- 369 NIZAMI chapter-9 ing.indd 307

II. Nizami. Khamsa

5 *Dhu'l-hijja* 886/3 February 1482, calligrapher Darvish Muhammad Taki.

308 f., 35x23 cm. Laid Oriental paper, sized and polished, cream-coloured. Text in 4 columns, enclosed in 21x12 cm frame, 25 lines per page; margins of oriental paper in different colours (each of the six poems in its own colour). Calligraphic *nasta'liq* script. Black ink; headlines inscribed in gold, in *thuluth* script.

45 miniatures; *shamsa* medallion (f.1) with the title of the manuscript inscribed; 6 '*unvan* headpieces; a gold frame with black outline; the frame on the border of the text and margins is drawn in the colours gold, white, green, black, and orange; margins on f.1 are decorated with images in gold and silver paint.

Leather binding with a flap, outer covers are decorated with deep embossing, painted with gold, red and greenish-brown paints. The inner is covered with openwork leather netting over a multicoloured background.

On f.1 is a record of the transfer of the manuscript by Shah Abbas to the *waqf* of the Sheikh Safi shrine in Ardabil, dated 1017/1608–1609: the numbers of sheets and miniatures are written in the lower corner on f.308. Stamps of the seal of the Ardabil *waqf*.

Margins of f.305 are restored using European paper with the watermark "ALMASSO".



II/1. Bottom cover with flap, outer.

Dorn 338.



II/2. Bottom cover with flap, inner. Dorn 338.



Acquisition: Ardabil collection, 1829.

References: Dorn (ed.) 1852, p. 322; Костыгова 1988, p. 148, No. 410; Додхудоева 1985, pp. 108, 110, 118, 124, 126, 128, 134, 135, 138, 141, 149, 158, 162, 163, 168, 169, 171, 175, 185, 186, 188, 190, 195, 198, 202, 204, 205, 210, 213, 215, 219, 126, 230, 253, 260, 264, 265, 268, 285; Керимов 1983, ill. 13, 28, 48, 51, 52, 58, 76, 79, 86, 106, 123; Сулейманова 1985, ill. 23-33, II/14; Васильева 2008, p. 42; Galerkina 1970, fig. 1-9; Gray 1961, p. 124.

Contents:

ff.1v-25 - Makhzan al-Asrar;

ff.26v-98v - Khosrow and Shirin;

ff.99v-148 - Leyli and Majnun;

ff.149v-201 - Haft Paykar;

ff.202v-271 - Sharafnameh;

ff.272v-308 - Iqbalnameh.



II/3. Unvan headpiece and beginning of The Treasury of Mysteries.

Dorn 338, ff.1v-2r.

III. Nizami. Khamsa (NLR PNS 83)

Shavval 896/August-September 1491, Shiraz.

366 ff., 33.5x21 cm. Laid paper, sized and polished, of light cream colour. Text in 4 columns, enclosed into 20.5x11 cm gold and blue frame, 21 lines per page. Calligraphic nasta'liq script. Black ink; headlines written in blue ink in reqa script.

24 miniatures; double frontispiece, 5 unvan headpieces; frames containing headings of sections are covered with gold ornaments in the shape of convolvulus, the text is written over it.

Leather binding with a flap. On the outer, the black coating is decorated with deep gold embossing with a central medallion, two small medallions, and corners. On the inner made of brown leather, the same set of elements is executed by applying openwork leather netting over a blue background. Fly-leaves are of marble (outer) and orange paper (inner) glued together.

On f.1, the Persian title Khamsa-yi Nizami is written in black ink. There is an erased oval-shaped stamp and worn-out inscription on f.1. On f.2, the title is inscribed in the Persian language, with an impress of a seal with the name "Eugenia" in Arabic letters, which belonged to the daughter of D.I. Dolgorukov, the Russian envoy to Qajar Iran. Another oval seal with the Arabic legend "Lord, save me [in the name of] Muhammad and Ali, 1263 (1846-1847)"; an inscription in Arabic: "How would I say that it belongs to me if the whole kingdom belongs to Allah!"; two erased impressions of oval and rectangular seals.



III/1. Double frontispiece. PNS 83, ff.2v-3r.





Lexical notes are made in small *shikasta* handwriting script in some areas of the margins that explain some rare words, indicate the names of poetic metaphors, and comment on their meaning. In the margins of f.65v there is a comment about the names of 30 melodies composed by Barbad for Khosrow.

Near the colophon on f.366, there are two erased impressions of seals and a note written in *shikasta* script in Persian about a reading of the manuscript in *Shavval* December 1254/1838 - January 1839, 358 years after its creation.

Acquisition: D. I. Dolgorukov's collection, 1859.
References: Костыгова 1988, p. 148, No. 411;
Акимушкин-Иванов 1968b, ill. 11-17; Ашрафи 1974, pp. 32-35, ill. 18-21; Додхудоева 1985, pp. 112, 117, 129, 142, 149, 158, 171, 181, 190, 198, 212, 213, 215, 219, 229, 232, 237, 244, 252, 267, 273, 278, 283, 293, Fig. 8, 9; Керимов 1983, ill. 8, 29, 35, 42, 47, 53, 61, 91, 94, 96, 98, 109, 127, 129, 135;

Contents:

Сулейманова 1985, ill. 55-68.

ff.2v.-32 - Makhzan al-Asrar;

ff.32v.-112 - Leyli and Majnun;

ff.112v.-170 - Haft Paykar;

ff.189v.-235- Khosrow and Shirin;

 $ff. 235 v. \hbox{-} 320 \hbox{-} \textit{Sharafnameh};$

ff.320v.-366 - Iqbalnameh.



III/2. This parable from the poem *The Treasury* of Mysteries tells the story of an old woman who complained to the powerful Sultan Sanjar that she had been abused by a drunken *shikhna* [a local legal executive] who had broken into her house, beaten her up and accused her of various crimes. Paying no heed to the old woman's complaints, the Sultan was subsequently defeated, lost his kingdom and became a prisoner of his enemies. Traditionally, in this scene the Sultan sits on horseback surrounded by his suite; the old woman is holding a flap of the ruler's kaftan in a gesture that represents a plea for protection.

III/3. Illustration of the parable of the two wise men who had to share a house. They decided to resolve a dispute over possession of the house with a competition: they each cooked a poisonous treat for the other. Having taken an antidote in advance, the first man drank the poison offered by his rival and survived. Then he gave his counterpart an ordinary rose, reciting a few spells over it in the process and, believing it was poisoned, the second man breathed in its scent and died of fear.

The one neutralized the poison in his body by remedies.

The other died from one rose because of baseless fears.

(Here and elsewhere the English translation of verses from *Makhzan al-asrar* is given after the edition:

Nezami 1945.)

This parable is given in the 12th section (*maqa-la*) "On taking leave from this stopping place", that is, about death and bidding farewell to earthly life.

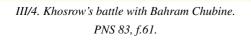


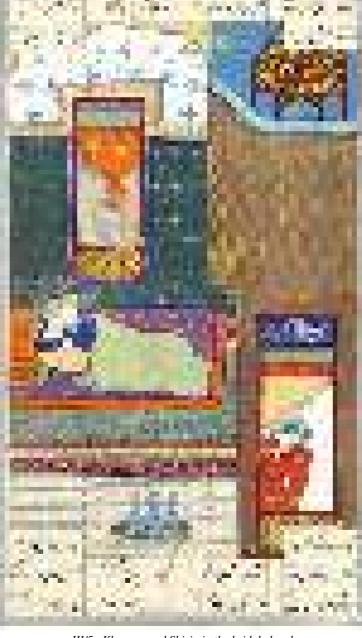
III/2. Sultan Sanjar and an old woman. PNS 83, f.17.



III/3. Dispute between two wise men. PNS 83, f.24.







III/5. Khosrow and Shirin in the bridal chamber. PNS 83, f.100.

III/4. Having married Maryam, daughter of Qeysar (the Byzantine emperor), and thus enlisting his support, Khosrow headed with his army to Safavid Iran to overthrow Bahram Chubine, who had usurped his throne. Khosrow watched the battle from a throne mounted on the back of an elephant. Before him stood the sage Buzurg-Umid, using astrological calculations to predict the outcome of the battle and determine the right time to attack.

They mounted the king's throne on the back of an elephant, with [soldiers] drawing swords for a mile around.

Buzurg-Umid [stood] before the intoxicated elephant, measuring time, with the astrolabe in his hands.

He looked at it, seeking an auspicious moment: when will the enemy's cause weaken? When the time came, he said to the king: Make haste! Your star shines brightly, use this moment!

III/5. After teaching a good lesson to Khosrow, who, despite his promises, became drunk during the wedding feast, Shirin waits for her husband to sober up, and the lovers finally come together. Nizami describes this scene with exquisite and complex metaphors full of subtle eroticism:

Pink water seeped into the snow-white bowl; sugar melted in the almond shell.

The shell on the coral branches strengthened its scaffold, water and fire in one place concluded a contract with each other.

With the mixed colours of water and fire, the rooms were filled with cinnabar and mercury.

For whole days they forgot about sleep, drilled ruby with pearls.

Another day they slept, intoxicated, violet on the [narcissus's] chest, narcissus in the [violet's] arms.

The young man spends several days roaming, and all the fellow travellers he meets on his way turn out to be *ghouls* that lead him astray. Having suffered much hardship, he finds himself by night in a beautiful garden lit by the moon and full of various fruits. The elderly owner at first takes the young man for a thief, but then offers to adopt him and make him the heir of his wealth. Mahan agrees, and the owner tells him to climb onto a platform in a large sandalwood tree and wait for him to come back, but to talk and listen to no-one. Suddenly, seventeen beautiful girls appear in the garden.

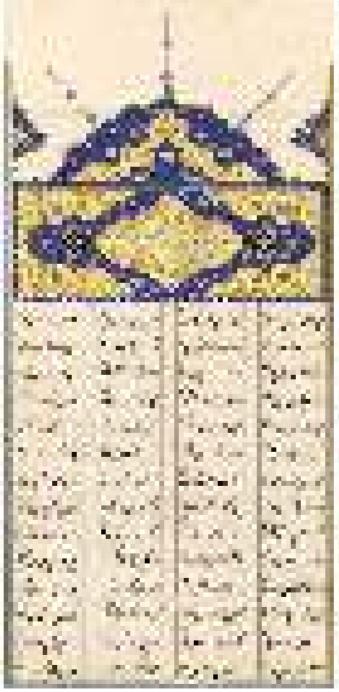
He wished to find some excellent device to go down quickly from his airy (perch):

And with such beauties, houri-like in form, to be in heaven without Judgement Day.

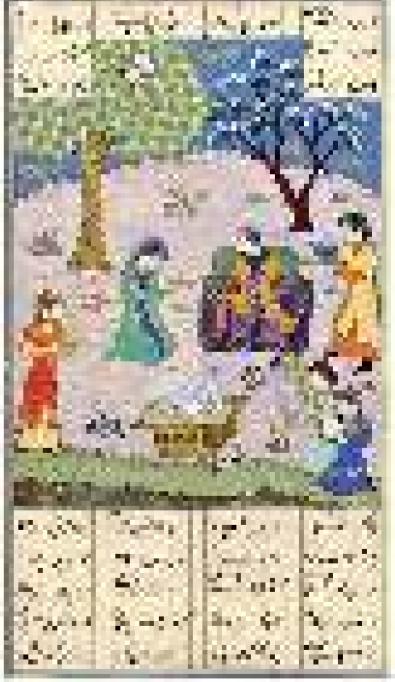
Again, he brought to mind the old man's words, he held in check the struggling of

Eventually, Mahan is lured by the leader of the beauties; he descends from the tree, but the beautiful girl in his arms suddenly turns into an ugly *ifrit* [demon]. When day breaks the demons are gone, and the beautiful garden with them.

The miniature depicts the beauties and Mahan looking at them from the tree.



III/6. Unvan headpiece to the poem Seven Beauties.
PNS 83, f.170v.



III/7. Mahan in the enchanted garden. PNS 83, f.216v.

276- 369 NIZAMI chapter-9 ing.indd 314

III/8. Iskandar's first military campaign was a mighty warriors.

Another man of Zang went to battle; He opened his tongue with a handful of boasting, Saying: - "The black cloud has come from the mountain (army) of Zang;

It rains not, save dragons and crocodiles (sword-blows):

I am Siya Gúla of hero-arm (powerful); Am equal in a balance to the ponderous mountain: *Pluck up the elephant's neck from the body;* Drink in a breath the fountain of the Nile (render it dry).



III/9. Iskandar and the captured demon of the Rus. PNS 83, f.309.

war with the Zangis, who tormented the dwellers of Egypt-Misr. During the second battle, a mighty Zangi warrior named Zaraja stepped forward from the ranks, taking the lives of the men of Rum one by one. Iskandar defeated Zaraja and then several other

I stain many garments in the foul fluid (black colour)." When that world-seeker (Sikandar) saw that that foolish speaker Made his own navel (person) musk-smelling (odoriferous) with (his own dried) blood.

For that one, whose life I pluck with iron-weapon,

He raised the sword-point against his

(Siya Gúla's) neck;

And cast down his head from that foolish talking.

III/9. The story of Iskandar's battles with the Rus echoes a real historical event, the conquest of the town of Barda at the confluence of the Kura and Araz by the Rus in 943-944 AD. In Nizami's narrative, the Rus attack Abkhazia and Barda and capture Queen Nushaba.

Having assembled troops from different countries, Iskandar moves towards the Rus. The battle lasts for many days with mixed success. Then the Rus release onto the battlefield a mysterious chained creature: it looks like a man dressed in a fur coat and is extremely fierce and almost invulnerable in battle. Following the advice of a sage, Iskandar throws the invincible warrior to the ground using a noose and drags him to the Rum army.

> Against that demon, came the river of majesty (Sikandar), Like the black cloud that comes up from the mountain.

For the king's fortune took down (overpowered) his grasp (of power).

A noose, enemy-enslaving, the monarch Cast like the collar of time (with true aim). It fell upon the enemy's neck;

The sky gave the ground-kiss to the monarch! When the noose came upon the enemy's neck, The Khusrau, the demon-binder, hastened. He drew his head within the curl of the noose;

Dragging, dragged him even so towards the army. That lion, prey (man)- consuming, wallowed,

Like a fawn under the panther's claws.



III/8. The Battle of Iskandar with the Zangi. PNS 83, f.251v.

276- 369 NIZAMI chapter-9 ing.indd 315 6.01.2022 16:18 III/10. A beautiful girl, loved by Iskandar, fell ill and was at death's door. Saddened, Iskandar went to the roof of his palace and saw in the distance a shepherd with his flock.

For some time, he walked on the roof, looking at the mountains and steppes.

From the roof of his high castle, he saw a shepherd and his sheep beside him.

A grand old man, worthy and wise, and his cap and head were in white, like camphor.

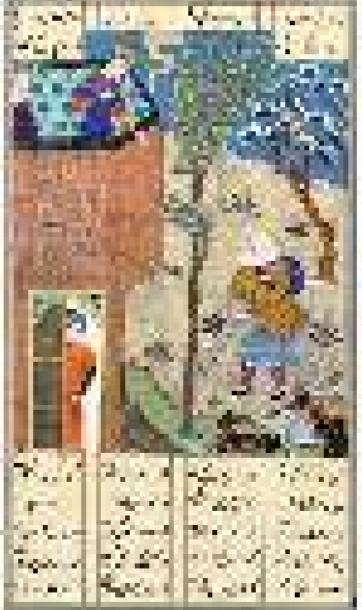
The king began a conversation with the shepherd, who told him a consoling story about a prince whose beloved fell ill but then recovered. Iskandar was relieved; in the meantime, the news came that his beloved had also recovered.

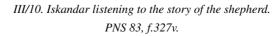
III/11. An illustration of the narrative of Iskandar's conversation with the seven sages: Arastu (Aristotle), Valis (Thales of Miletus), Socrates, Bulinas (Apollonius of Tyana), Furfurius (Porphyry of Tyre), Hermes and Falatun (Plato).

These are the seven orbits around the shah, and the shah became the centre in that circle.

A brilliant feast, like the shining of the sun, far from the wind [empty talk] and free of wine!

The sages take turns to express their views on the creation of the world.







III/11. Iskandar talks with seven wise men. PNS 83, f.339v.







III/13. Bottom cover with flap, outer. PNS 83.



III/12. Colophon. PNS 83, f.366.

III/14. Bottom cover with flap, inner. PNS 83.

15 *Dhu'l-qa'da* 913/27 March 1508, Shiraz. Copied by Abu Turab Mun'im al-Din al-Awhadi.

317 ff., 29x17.5 cm. European paper with a "Bull's head" watermark, sized and polished, cream-coloured. Text in 4 columns, enclosed in a 19x10 cm frame, 21 lines per page. Calligraphic *nasta'liq* script. Black ink, headings written in blue ink.

25 miniatures; double frontispiece with the text of the beginning of *The Treasury of Mysteries*; 5 *unvan* headpieces; frame in gold and blue paint; headings within the frame written over ornamental bindweed with golden leaves; illuminated colophon.

Leather binding with a flap; the outer binding is covered by brown leather with embossed golden central medallions, small pendants, and corners. On the inner, the same set of elements is repeated on burgundy leather with exquisite leather netting over a blue background. Folio 1 bears a record of the transfer of the manuscript by Shah Abbas to the waqf of the Sheikh Safi shrine in Ardabil. Seals of the Ardabil waqf. F.1 displays an erased impress of a round seal and inscription mentioning the price (2 tumans?). On ff. 31 and 65 there is the impress of an oval seal with the date 997/1588—is the impress of an oval seal with the date 997/1588—out in

Folio 65 also bears an impress of an oval seal with the legend "" - "ينده آل على محمد قلى" - "Muhammad-Quli, the slave of Ali's family".

Folios 4 and 9 are upside down; the binding was restored at the Library, and a new spine added.

Acquisition: Ardabil Collection, 1829.

References: Dorn (ed.) 1852, p. 323; Костыгова 1988, p. 149, No. 412; Акимушкин-Иванов 1968b, ill. 26-29; Ашрафи 1978, ill. 29, 31, 33; Додхудоева 1985, pp. 112, 116, 124, 130, 142,172, 181, 191, 198, 210, 213, 215, 233, 245, 252, 268, 273, 279, Fig. 10; Керимов 1983, ill. 7, 12, 16, 63, 66, 87, 90, 118, 125, 130; Сулейманова 1985, ill. 87-101, II / 23-24.

Contents:

ff.1v-31 - Makhzan al-Asrar; ff.31v-65 - Khosrow and Shirin; ff.65v-122 - Leyli and Majnun; ff.122v-187 - Haft Paykar; ff.187v-271 - Sharafnameh; ff. 271v-317- Iqbalnameh.



IV/1. Double frontispiece with the beginning of the poem The Treasury of Mysteries.

Dorn 340, ff.1v-2a.







IV/2. The parable of the preacher Jesus (Isa) and the dead dog. Dorn 340, f.21v.

IV/2. The illustration refers to the parable of the tenth discourse of *The Treasury of Mysteries* about signs of the end of the world. Roaming the world, Isa met people who gathered round a dead dog and discussed the unpleasant scene, its mouth with its tongue sticking out. When it was his turn to speak, Isa drew everyone's attention to the beauty of its teeth.

He said: "The picture remaining of its body shows that pearls are not so white as its teeth."

And the others, through fear and hope, whitened their teeth with that burnt oyster shell.

Do not seek the faults of others and thine own merit; turn thine eyes down to yourself.



IV/3. Bahram Gur in the red dome. Dorn 340, f.160v.

IV/3. On Tuesday, dressed in red, Bahram Gur visits the Slavic princess in the Red Dome.

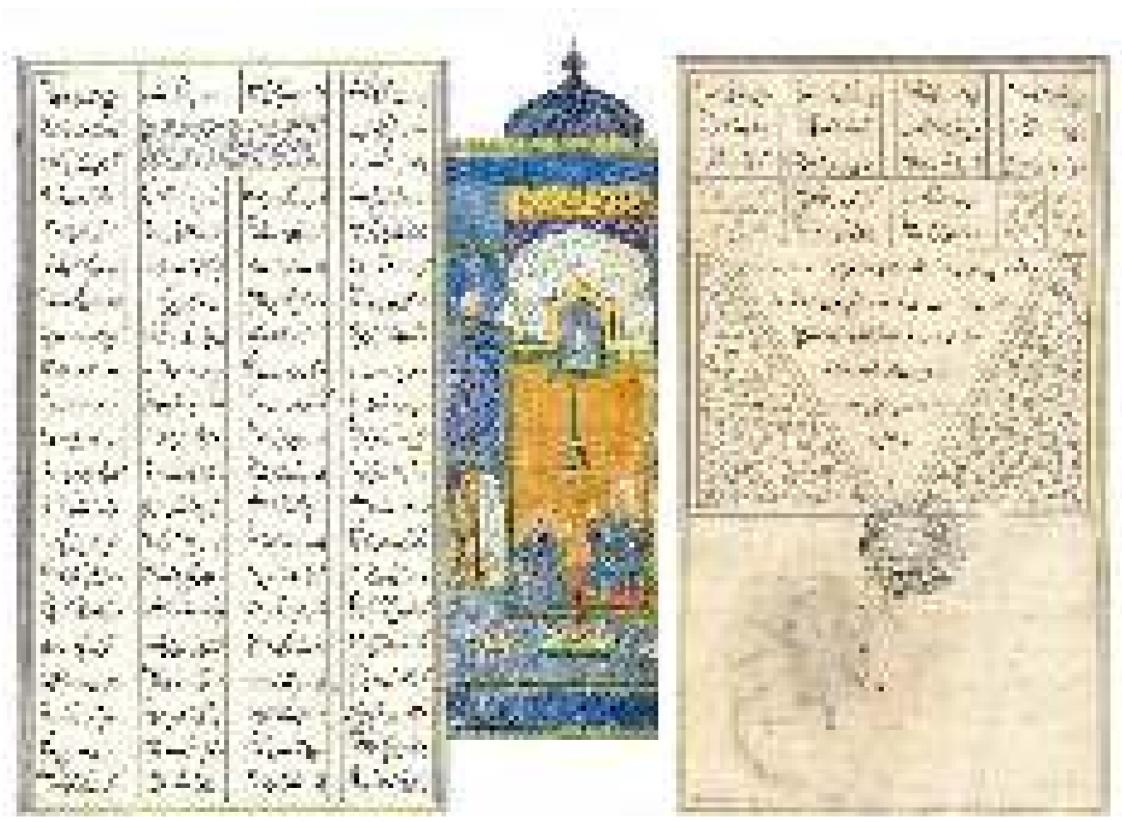
When came December's month, upon a day as short as a night is in the month of June,
The best of all the (seven) days of the week,
Tuesday its happy and auspicious name,
The day of Mars, and martial (too) its hue;-(on such a day) Bahram, namesake of both,
Adornment, red with red together, leagued, and to the Red Dome hastened at dawn.

The girl tells Bahram a fairy tale about a king's daughter who tested her suitors with various riddles.

IV/4. On Wednesday Bahram Gur visits the Maghrib princess in the Turquoise Dome; she tells him the story of the Egyptian boy Mahan who lost his way in a desolate land among ghouls.

On Wednesday, from the blossom of the sun when turquoise-hued the blackness of the sphere,
The king, (sun-like) in world-illuming power, in triumph sphere-like, dressed in turquoise-blue.
He went for pleasure to the Turquoise Dome; the day was short, the theme in view was long.





Bahram Gur in the turquoise dome. Dorn 340, f.164

IV/5. Colophon. Dorn 340, f.317.

Safar 952/April - May 1545, copied by Muhammad Qivam al-Katib al-Shirazi.

384 ff., 31x17.5 cm. Laid Oriental paper, sized and polished, cream hue. Text in 4 columns, enclosed in 19x10 cm frame, 20 lines per page. Calligraphic *nasta'liq* script. Black ink, headings in gold.

25 miniatures; double frontispiece with almost completely worn-out text at the beginning of *Makhzan al-asrar* inscribed in white paint over gold background, 5 *unvan* headpieces; frame made in golden, blue and other colours; headings in blue frames, the background presents curly vegetal ornamentation with golden leaves and yellow and orange flowers.

The binding is contemporary with the manuscript, but heavily damaged and restored, with the leather covering that used to be on the inner now placed on the outer cover, in a black frame. It is adorned with a central medallion, pendants and corners of the damaged and wornout openwork leather netting on a blue background; the rest of the surface is covered with faded gold embossing with vegetal ornamentation and cloud-shaped ribbons. The inner covers are pasted with dark blue paper.

An old, early 20th century restoration: fly-leaves of European paper added at the beginning and end of the book; new margins glued to the last sheet (f.384); protective sheets (not foliated) glued in before the miniatures.

There are inscriptions on the fly-leaf at the beginning of the book (f. II): "Ex libris F. Erdmann" and "No. 15"; several notes (mostly couplets) of Hajji Muhammad Baqir Shirvani's son Muhammad Karim, dated the first Sunday of *Nowruz* 1248 (apparently, 24 March 1823), 12 *Rabi*' II 1240/3 December 1824, and 1232/1816–1817 (the notes were written in the Haji-Tarkhan fortress, i.e. in Astrakhan.) It was probably the same person who wrote on the back of the last fly-leaf a list of historical

events related to Shirvan in the period from 1145/1732–1733 to 1236/1820–1821. F.1 displays a worn-out signature (*penche*) and a partially worn and illegible seal with a note.

A sheet with a description written in the hand of Prof. Vasiliy D. Smirnov is attached.

Acquisition: from the collection of F. Erdman, 1875. References: ОИПБ за 1875, pp. 39-40, No. 20; Костыгова 1988, p. 149, No. 413; Ашрафи1 974, ill. 56, 57, 58; Ашрафи 1978, ill. 34, 36; Додхудоева 1985, pp. 109, 119, 121, 131, 137, 150, 159, 162, 173, 182, 192, 199, 221, 239, 246, 254, 261, 266, 275; Керимов 1983, ill. 10; Сулейманова, 1985, ill. 117-122.

Contents:

ff.1v-34. - Makhzan al-Asrar; ff.34v-125 - Khosrow and Shirin; ff.125v-187 - Leyli and Majnun; ff.187v-255 - Haft Paykar; ff.255v-343 - Sharafnameh; ff.343v-384 - Iqbalnameh.









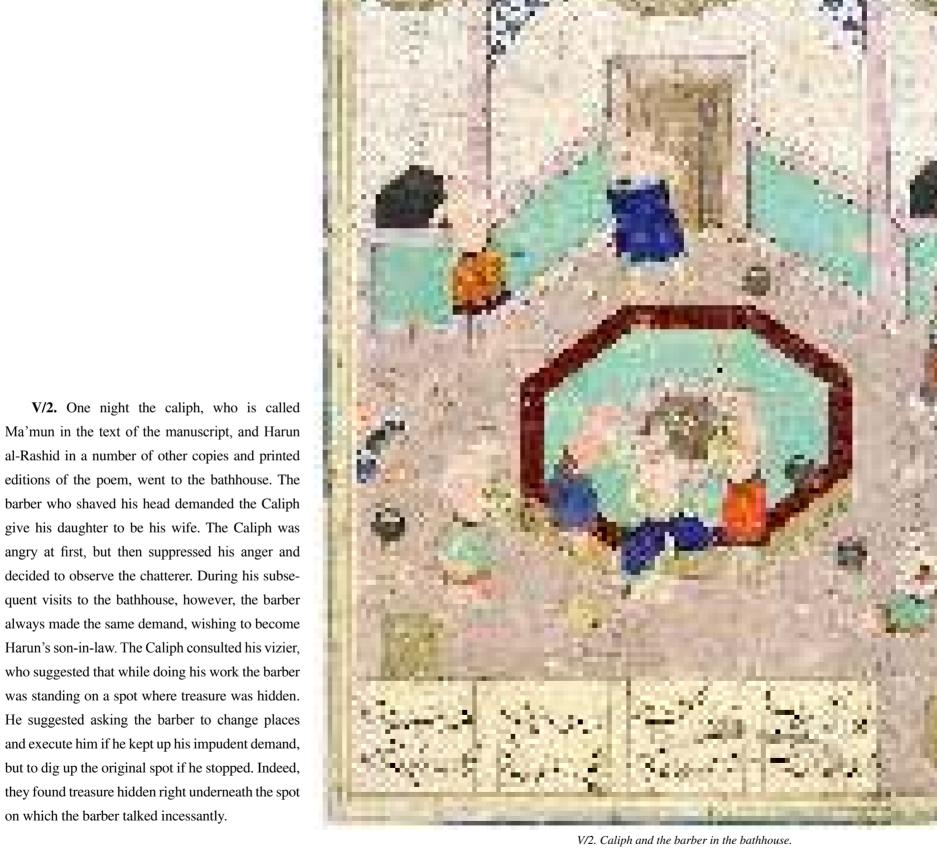
V/1. The king and the truthful old man. PNS 105, f.27v.

V/1. An illustration of the parable about a king who oppressed his subjects. One of his informers told him about an old man who called the king a tyrant and oppressor. The king ordered preparations to be made for an execution, that is, to spread out a leather mat and pour sand on it. When the king's men came for him, the old man was prepared to die; he'd performed the ritual washing and brought a shroud. He repeated all his accusations in the presence of the tyrant and the king was amazed by his truthfulness and frankness.

When the king recognized his superiority in truth, he realized the sage's rectitude and his own falsehood.

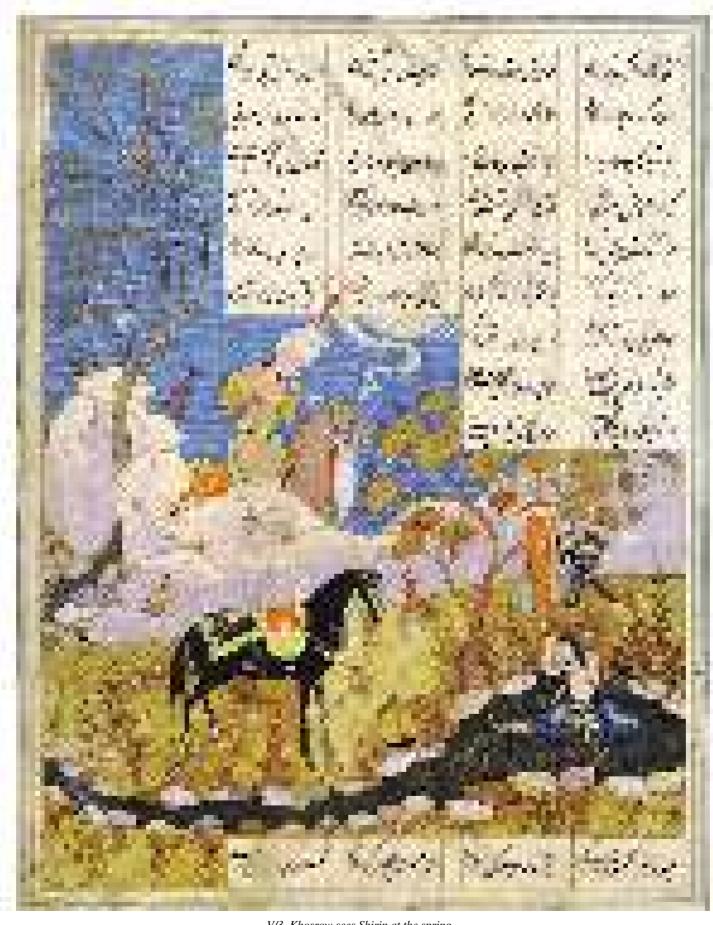
He said: "Take away the funeral herbs and the shroud; dress him in our robe of honour and perfume him with ambergris".

on which the barber talked incessantly.



PNS 105, f.32v.





V/3. Khosrow sees Shirin at the spring.

PNS 105, f.51.

See ill. I/3.

The Khamsa of Nizami: Manuscripts in the National Library of Russia

V/4. While still children, Leyli and Qays

A group of frightened children gathered with him (Qays). Each child, inspired by hope and fear, took up their studies and lessons. Together with those boys, several girls were sitting at the writing boards, They came to the school from different tribes and places.

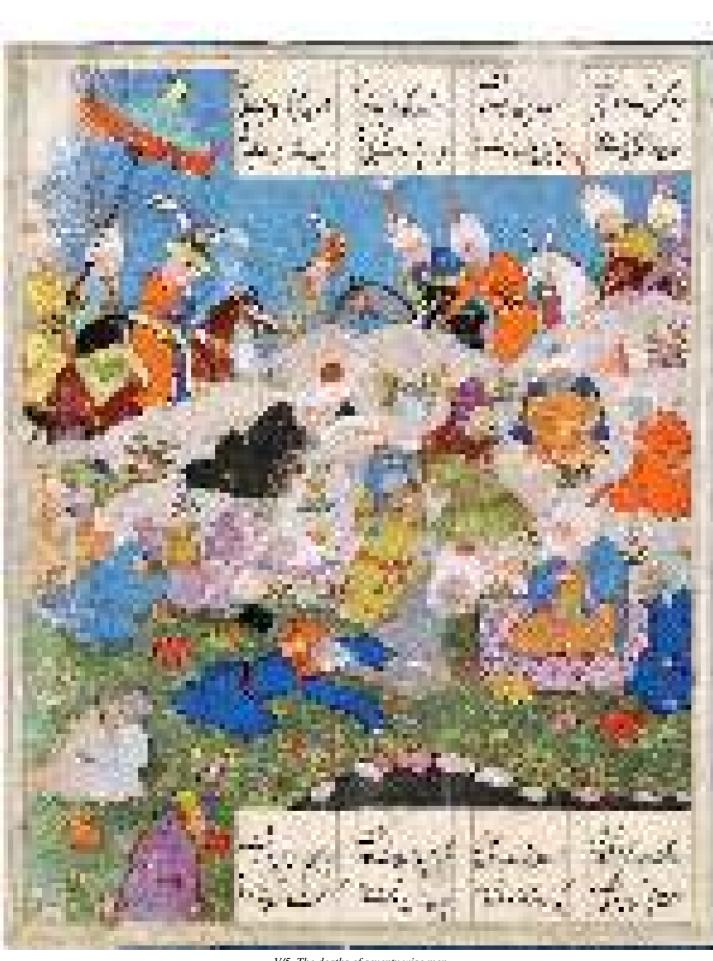
fell in love with each other at school.



V/4. Leyli and Majnun at school. PNS 105, f.137.







V/5. The deaths of seventy wise men. PNS 105, f.357.

V/5. Seventy philosophers launched a debate to determine the wisest of them, who should lead the rest. Hermes found counter-arguments to all of their reasoning. Envious, the other philosophers agreed to pretend not to hear his words and to deny everything he said. When Hermes realized what was going on, he exclaimed "Hey, do not move from your place until the Day of Resurrection!", and all seventy froze dead in their places.

Since they played unfairly in the tent of truth, their belongings were thrown out.

Hanging their heads down to their feet, they froze, like water from the cold, in their places.

AH 986–987/1578–1579 CE (last colophon dated 4 *Jumada* II 987/August 6, 1579).

286 ff., 33.5x21 cm. Laid Oriental paper, thin, sized and polished. Text in 4 columns, enclosed in 21.5x12 cm frame, 25 lines per page. Calligraphic *nasta'liq* script. Black ink, headings in gold.

20 miniatures, including the diptych before the beginning of the text; 6 *unvan* headpieces; artistically designed colophons.

19th century binding, Central Asian (*muqavva*): covered on the outer with burgundy paper with embossed gold medallion and pendants with the bookbinder's stamp: "عمل مير عادل خواجه صحاف" - ('amal-i-mir 'Adil-khwaja sahhaf). On the inner, there is blue paper with silver speckles and a gold embossed frame. The edges of the covers and the spine are made of thick green shagreen. The ex-libris of the Winter Palace library is glued on the inner of the bottom cover.

The manuscript is enclosed in a wrapper sewn from white fabric, with an inscription in black ink "خمسه نظامی"; pinned to the cover is a round tag with an inscription in Russian: "His Highness Emir of Bukhara. 1913 His Imperial Majesty Division II No. 1".

Old restoration: the edges of the initial sheets are strengthened with strips of paper.

Acquisition: 1913, a gift of the Emir of Bukhara Sayyid Alim Khan to Nicholas II.

References: Сборник РПБ, р. 2, No. 5; Костыгова 1988, р. 150, No. 415; Додхудоева 1985, р. 47, 302; Дьяконова 1964, р. 13, ill. 24-29; Керимов 1983, ill. 70, 77, 101, 117, 139-140; Сулейманова 1985, ill. 123-134. Джумаев 2017, р. 158, 170-175.

Contents:

ff.3v-28 - Makhzan al-Asrar;

ff.28v-76 - Khosrow and Shirin;

ff.76v-124 - Leyli and Majnun;

ff.124v-176 - Haft Paykar;

ff.176v-247 - Sharafnameh;

ff.247v-285 - Iqbalnameh.

There is writing at the beginning and the end of the book on the flyleaves of 19th century Central Asian paper. On f.1v: a couplet and four quatrains of didactic content written diagonally in neat nasta'liq script by Ala al-Din al-Husayni al-Alavi, bearing also his signature: - "حرره علاوالدین الحسینی العلوی". On f.286: a short story about Muhammad bin al-Fazl Balkhi from the hagiographical essay Nafahat al-Uns min Hadhrat al-Quds ("The breathing of friendly closeness from the gardens of holiness") by 'Abd ar-Rahman Jami, and a quatrain from the Gulistan by Sa'di.

F.2 displays the title *Khamsa-yi Shaikh Nizami* written in *nasta'liq* script and a note about the number of miniatures in it; at the bottom of the sheet there is a hemistich:

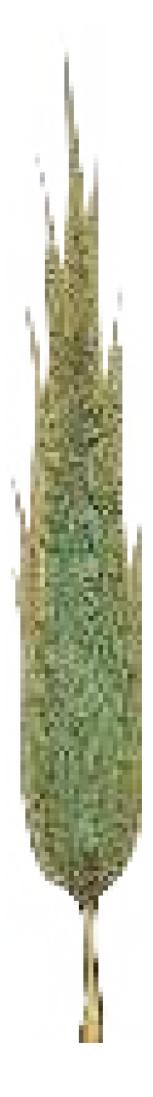
A small kingdom of those who know no sorrow will not bring up two kings

This may be a paraphrase of the *beyt* (distich) from a *ghazal* by Sa'ib Tabrizi:

زین سبب طفلان جدل دارند با دیوانه ها

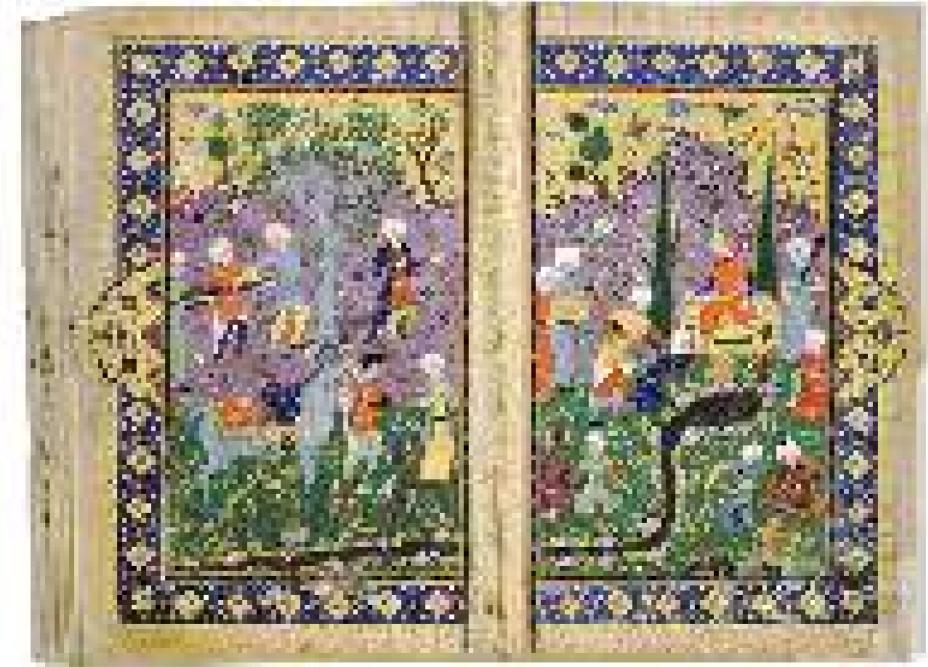
Saib, the small kingdom of light-hearted is not for two kings,

Therefore, children quarrel with madmen".



6.01.2022 16:18

VI/1. This miniature does not relate to the content of Nizami's poems, it is one of the decorative frontispiece miniatures. Such diptychs depicted some amusement for a royal personage: hunting, feasting outdoors, or, as in this particular case, an assembly accompanied by the performance of music. The right half of the diptych has a young, crowned ruler seated on a throne above a spring. Before him a supplicant kisses his feet. In the foreground by the stream are the musicians, a flautist and a lutenist; a large tambourine—daf is lying on the ground in front of them. On the left side of the diptych, one sees servants carrying treats on dishes and a boy holding the ruler's horse by the reins.



VI/1. Diptych. Entertainment in the garden or Preparation for entertainment in the garden.

PNS 272, ff. 2v-3r.

VI/2. The parable illustrates the second

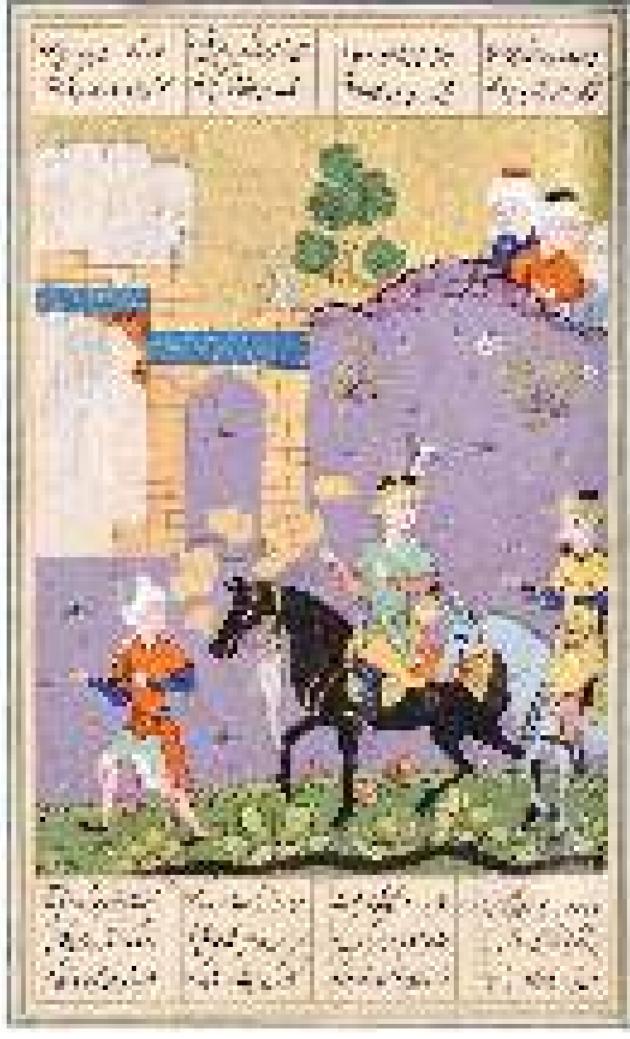
chapter (*maqala*) of the poem, in which the poet addresses the sovereign and urges him to maintain justice and care for the well-being of his subjects. Anushirvan (the historical Sassanid ruler of Iran Khosrow I, Anushirvan, reigned from 531–579) became separated from his suite while hunting and left alone with his vizier. They stumbled upon the ruins of a village, among which two owls were sitting. The king

asked his counsellor to interpret what the birds were saying. The vizier explained that they were discussing a matchmaking; one owl demanded the other one pay a ransom ("the cost of milk") for the betrothed daughter, meaning the ruined village and several others. The owlgroom said that was no problem, as oppression and injustice from the king would soon reduce many villages to ruins. Hearing this, the king deeply repented of what he had done and abolished the taxes that had destroyed his subjects.

In this miniature, Anushirvan is depicted sitting

on his horse and talking with his vizier who is on a mule; a young servant runs before them. In the background there are ruined buildings and the two birds on a roof. This part of the miniature is apparently unfinished; in addition to the two owls drawn in whitewash with black contours, the outlines of two considerably larger birds are seen through the wash. Three observers are visible behind the hill in

the background.



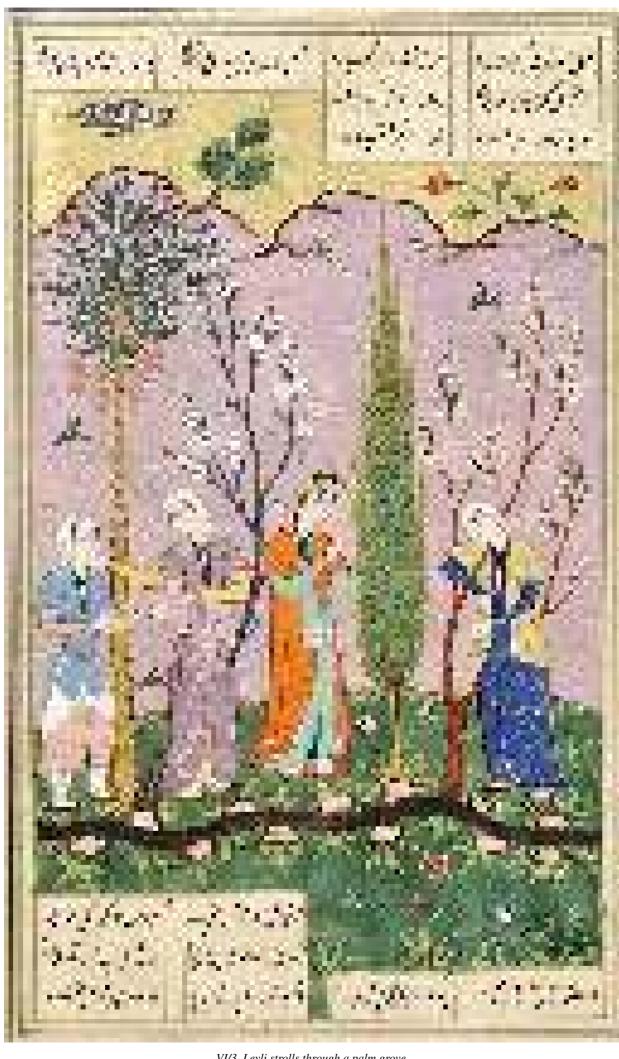
VI/2. Anushirvan and his vizier listening to the owls in a ruined village.

PNS 272, f.14.

276- 369 NIZAMI chapter-9 ing.indd 330







VI/3. Leyli strolls through a palm grove. PNS 272, f.91v.

WI/3. This miniature illustrates the chapter in which Nizami describes the ebullience of nature in spring; an abundance of flowers and trees, their colours and fragrance, and the singing of birds. This description is structured in accordance with the style of medieval Persian and Persian-language poetry: it is rich in complex metaphors, original comparisons, hyperbole and assonance. The poet exhibits his complete mastery of belles-lettres technique. Reflecting the text, the artist has filled the landscape with images of plants and blossoming trees, including the palm tree that places the location: a palm grove to which Leyli goes with her friends for a walk. During the walk, she grieves in her loneliness, and complains of her estrangement from Majnun.

VI/4. Majnun in the desert among wild animals. PNS 272, f.103v.

VI/4. Having mourned the loss of his father, Majnun returned to the desert and lived there as a hermit among the wild animals. The animals approach him and obey his commands; contrary to nature, predators coexist peacefully

with herbivores:

His dominion has reached such a degree that predators have forgotten their predatory temper.

A wolf would not offend a sheep; the lion would not touch a wild ass,

A dog would befriend a hare, a young deer would drink the milk of a lioness.

He (Majnun) was going by, and they, entrusting him their lives, lined up in front and behind him. In the place where he had spent the night, the fox swept the ground with her tail.

The deer ran without fear, lay down, stretching her legs.

He leaned on the neck of the onager, laying his head on the deer's thigh.

Beside him knelt the lion, like a bodyguard with his sword at the ready.









VI/5. Iskandar meets Khizr in the land of darkness. PNS 272, f.244.

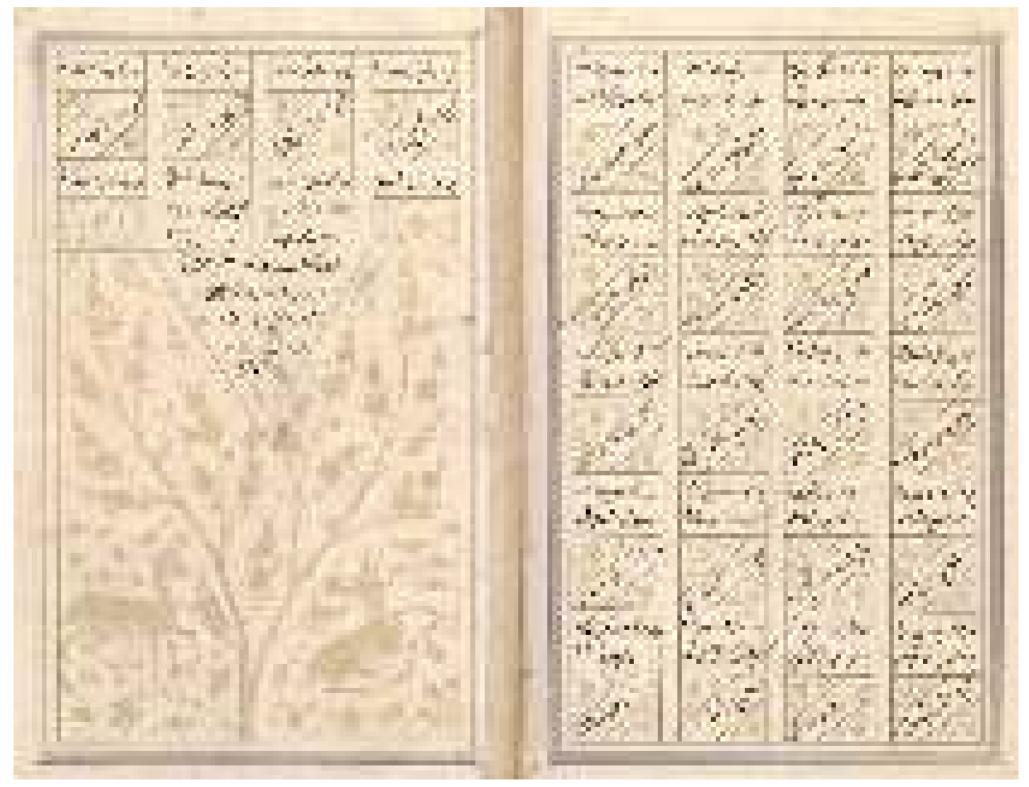


VI/5. After numerous military campaigns and battles, Iskandar hears, during a feast, a story about the fountain of life that bestows immortality, and he sets off with his army to the land of eternal darkness, in search of the fountain. The Iranian version of the legend, which Nizami relates first, says that the king sent the Prophet Khizr in advance of the troops and gave him a magic stone that would shine near the water. Finding the water of life, Khizr drank it and gave some to his horse, but the water had mysteriously disappeared by the time he took Iskandar to the fountain.

The miniature depicts Khizr and Iskandar sitting by the fountain. Always depicted wearing green clothes, Khizr's rank as prophet is indicated by a halo around his head.

The Khamsa of Nizami: Manuscripts in the National Library of Russia

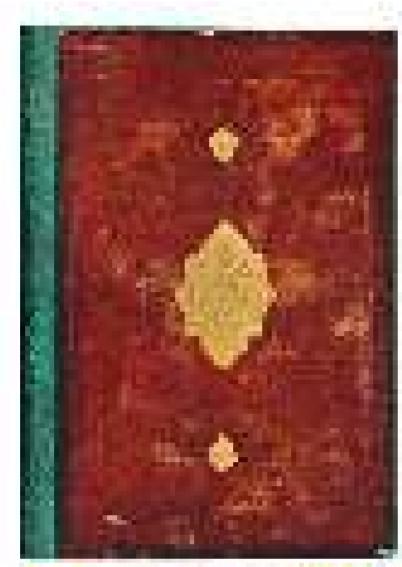
VI/6. The space around the colophon is occupied by a drawing in gold of an almond tree in bloom and two gazelles under it. The colophon shows the date on which the copying of this last poem was completed: 4 *Jumada* II 987/6 August 1579. In addition, as well as on some other manuscripts presented by the Emir of Bukhara, a fake date was added later: 585 AH, which corresponds to 1189 AD.



VI/6. Colophon. PNS 272, f.285.







VI/7. Lower cover, outer. PNS 272.



VI/8. Lower cover of the binding, the inner with the ex-libris of the Winter Palace library.

PNS 272.

VII. Nizami. Iskandarnameh Part 1: Sharafnameh (NLR, Dorn 344)

1570s (up to 986/1578–1579). Copied by Ahmad al-Husayni.

97 ff., 36x23.5 cm. Laid Oriental paper, sized and polished, of light cream hue, covered with tiny gold specks. Text in 4 columns, enclosed in 23x13 cm frame, 17 lines per page. Calligraphic *nasta'liq* script. Black ink; headlines in white ink over a gold background.

11 miniatures (3 diptychs and 5 single); 1 *unvan* headpiece; a frame drawn in gold, turquoise and orange, with an external outline of red, blue or white; headings of the sections in illuminated frames; multicoloured margins, fully ornamented by paint sprayed through a stencil, with gold outlines. On ff. 2v-3r the lines are surrounded by gold 'cloudlets'.

Leather binding with a flap; the outer covers are decorated with deep embossing (central medallion, pendants, corners), painted in gold, red and greenish-brown. The inner is decorated with openwork leather netting over a multicoloured background.

On f.1: a record of the transfer of the manuscript by Shah 'Abbas to the *waqf* of the Sheikh Safi shrine in Ardabil in 1017/1608–1609; in the upper right-hand corner there is a note in Persian language with the title of the work and the numbers of sheets and miniatures. Seals of the *waqf*.

Acquisition: Ardabil collection, 1829.

References: Dorn (ed.) 1852, p. 324; Костыгова, 1988, p. 17, No. 46; Додхудоева 1985, pp. 104, 105, 235, 241, 246, 247, 263, 266, 279, Fig. 14a-b, 15; Керимов 1983, ill. 108, 112, 114-115, 122, 124, 133-134, 137-138.









The Khamsa of Nizami: Manuscripts in the National Library of Russia



dar's origin, and this miniature illustrates one of them. According to the sages of Rum, a pregnant woman lived as a hermit in a deserted place. Delivered of a child, she died, grieving over his fate. It so happened that, while hunting in the area, the powerful and just king of Rum Filiqus (Philip) stumbled across the dead woman and the baby. He ordered that the boy be taken with him. He brought him up as his own son and made him his heir. Nizami also mentions the Iranian legend that Iskandar was the son of Darius, but he himself believes that Iskandar's true father was Filiqus, and it was in Filiqus's palace that the future conqueror of the world was born.

VII/2. Nizami gives several versions of Iskan-

VII/2. King Filiqus finds Iskandar. Dorn 344, f.10.







VII/3. Diptych: Iskandar and the dying Dara. Dorn 344, ff.25v-26r.

VII/3. After Iskandar defeated the Zangi, the Achaemenid king Dara (Darius) demanded that Iskandar pay him a tribute. Iskandar assembled an army and set off for Iran; the Achaemenid and Greek armies met near Mosul and after the first day of fighting two of Darius's officers approached Iskandar and told him they were plotting to kill the Achaemenid king. Iskandar accepted them and,

on the next day, in the heat of battle, the conspirators attacked Darius and "struck him a lethal wound". Seeing the king bleed, Iskandar ordered the seizure and execution of the traitors. Resting the head of the dying man on his knees, he listened to Darius's last words and promised to fulfil his three requests: to take revenge on the traitors, to rule mercifully and to marry Darius's daughter Rawshanak.

VII/4. In the heat of the battle between the Greeks and Darius's army, two of the latter's officers, wishing his death, attacked the king:

They struck him a wound, side-cleaving,
By which the ground became
with blood like the tulip bed.
By that severe (fatal) wound,
Dara fell (from his horse),
A day of resurrection issued from the world.
The Kayanian tree came to the dust:
The wounded body rolled (weltered) in blood.

VII/4. The death of Dara (Darius). Dorn 344, ff.35.





VII/5. Iskandar and the ruler of the Sarir fortress.

Dorn 344, f.57v.

VII/5. Iskandar goes to the Sarir fortress, where, according to legend, the throne and cup of Kay-Khosrow are kept. The fortress's ruler, hearing of the king's approach goes to meet him with valuable gifts.

The Khamsa of Nizami: Manuscripts in the National Library of Russia



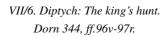












VIII. Nizami. Khamsa (NLR, PNS 66)

AH 1058/1648 CE (the colophon on f.297 of *Khosrow and Shirin* displays the date: early *Dhu'l-qa'da* 1058 (second half of November 1648).

410 ff., 39x24 cm. Laid paper, sized and polished, of greyish colour, with a very fine gold spray. Text in 4 columns, enclosed in 23-23.5x14 cm gold and coloured frame, 17 lines per page. Bold calligraphic *nasta'liq* script. Black ink; headings in red ink.

61 miniatures; 5 *unvan* headpieces; illuminated ornamental patterns on ff. 382v-383. Margins in different colours for each poem: green (*Makhzan al-Asrar*), purple (*Leyli and Majnun*), yellow-saffron (*Haft Paykar*), blue (*Khosrow and Shirin*), and red (*Sharafnameh*).

Binding: cardboard covers, on the outer covered with Iranian velvet of early to mid-17th century. The inners are covered with olive-coloured leather, decorated with burgundy openwork leather netting over a gold background of the central medallions, pendants and corners.

Acquisition: gift of the Emir of Bukhara Muzaffar al-Din to Alexander II, 1876.

References: ОИПБ за 1876, pp. 200-201; Костыгова 1988, p. 153, No. 420; Ашрафи 1974, pp. 104-109, ill. 86-91; Акимушкин-Иванов 1968а, pp. 134-135, Fig. 6-7; Джумаев 2017, pp. 158-159, 176-189; Додхудоева 1985, pp. 30-31, 34, 40, 45, 54, 56, 58,303; Керимов 1983, ill. 17, 22, 23, 27, 31, 32, 33, 40, 43, 45, 46, 56, 57, 72, 78, 80, 104, 107, 126, 131; Пугаченкова-Галеркина1979, ill. 60-62; Сулейманова 1985, ill. 163-206, II / 29-30; Васильева Д. 2015.

Contents:

ff.1v-36v - Makhzan al-Asrar;

ff.37v-108v - Leyli and Majnun;

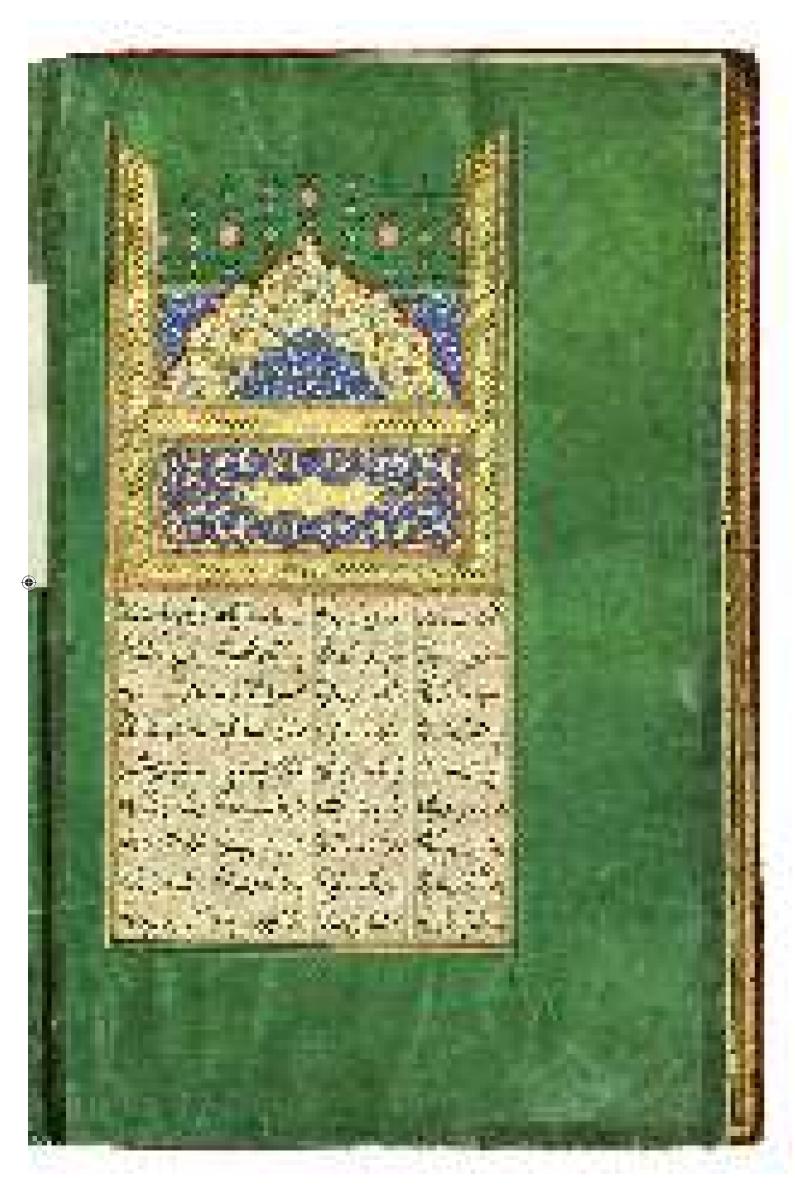
ff. 109 v-188 v-Haft Paykar;

ff.189v-207 - Khosrow and Shirin;

ff.298v-410v - Sharafnameh.







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VIII/1. Unvan headpiece and the beginning of the poem The Treasury of Mysteries. PNS 66, ff. 1v-2r.

VIII/2. The miniature depicts a boy lying on the ground with a broken leg; he is surrounded by his friends. The parable illustrating the 16th 'chapter' - maqala - tells of a boy who once broke his leg; his closest friend suggested hiding him in a pit and concealing the injury from the boy's father. On the other hand, a boy who was an enemy of the injured one decided to tell his parents and thus avoid them blaming him. Nizami completes the story with the following words:

He who possesses the jewel of wisdom, is able to do all things. Who can unloose the knot of fortune? He who can trample upon it. Since Nizami has passed beyond the possessions of this world, his work has surpassed high heaven.



VIII/2. The parable of a sensible enemy and a stupid friend. PNS 66, f.31v.









VIII/3. Majnun before the Ka'ba. PNS 66, f.55v.

VIII/3. When the story spread among the people about Majnun's love for Leyli, Majnun's relatives decide ask for her parents' consent. Leyli's father, however, refuses to give his daughter to a madman who was neither ally nor relative of his tribe. Seeing Majnun's grief and total desperation, his father goes with him on pilgrimage to the Ka'ba, hoping that the shrine will heal his son. Holding the ring of the Ka'ba's door, Majnun, instead of praying for healing from this all-encompassing love, vows to commit himself to her:

O Lord, let my striving for Leyli's i
mage grow every moment!

Take away what is left of my life and add to hers!

Though my grief made me as thin as a rake,

I do not want even a hair to fall from her head.

On one of his visits, Salim tells him a parable about a hermit living in a cave and eating grass. Passing by the cave, a king was curious about the hermit's diet, and one of the king's confidants said haughtily: "If you serve our shah, you won't need to eat grass any longer!" To that the hermit replied that grass was as sweet as honey compared to such offers.

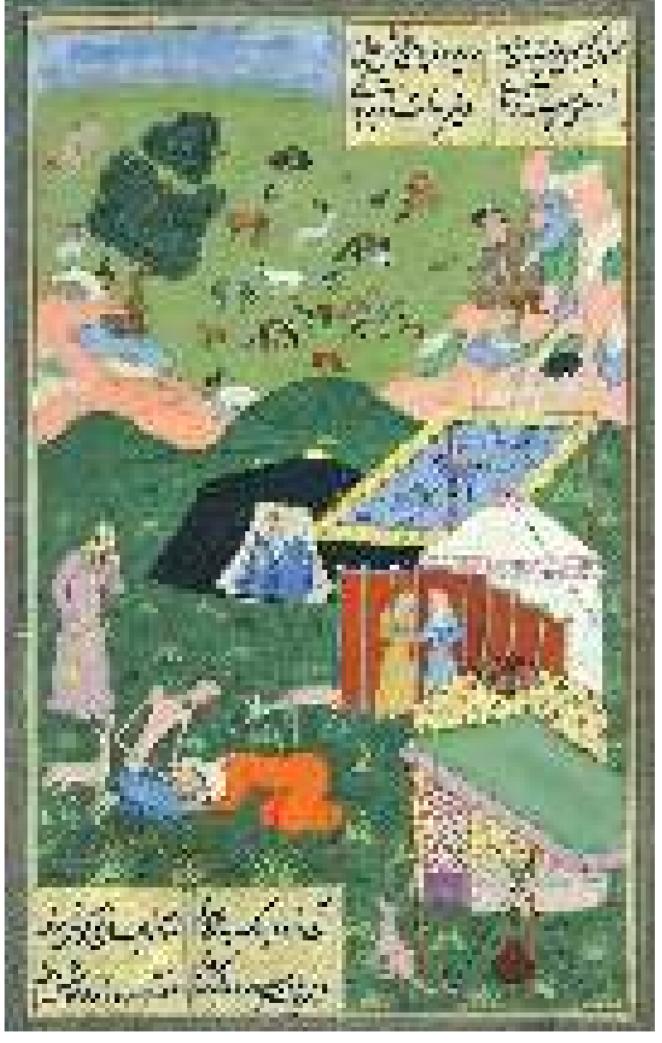
Hearing those words, the king jumped off his horse and fell at the hermit's feet, praying vehemently.

VIII/4. Majnun's uncle Salim would take food

to his nephew wandering the desert, but everything was passed on to the beasts surrounding Majnun.

VIII/4. The parable of the shah and the hermit. PNS 66, f.85v.

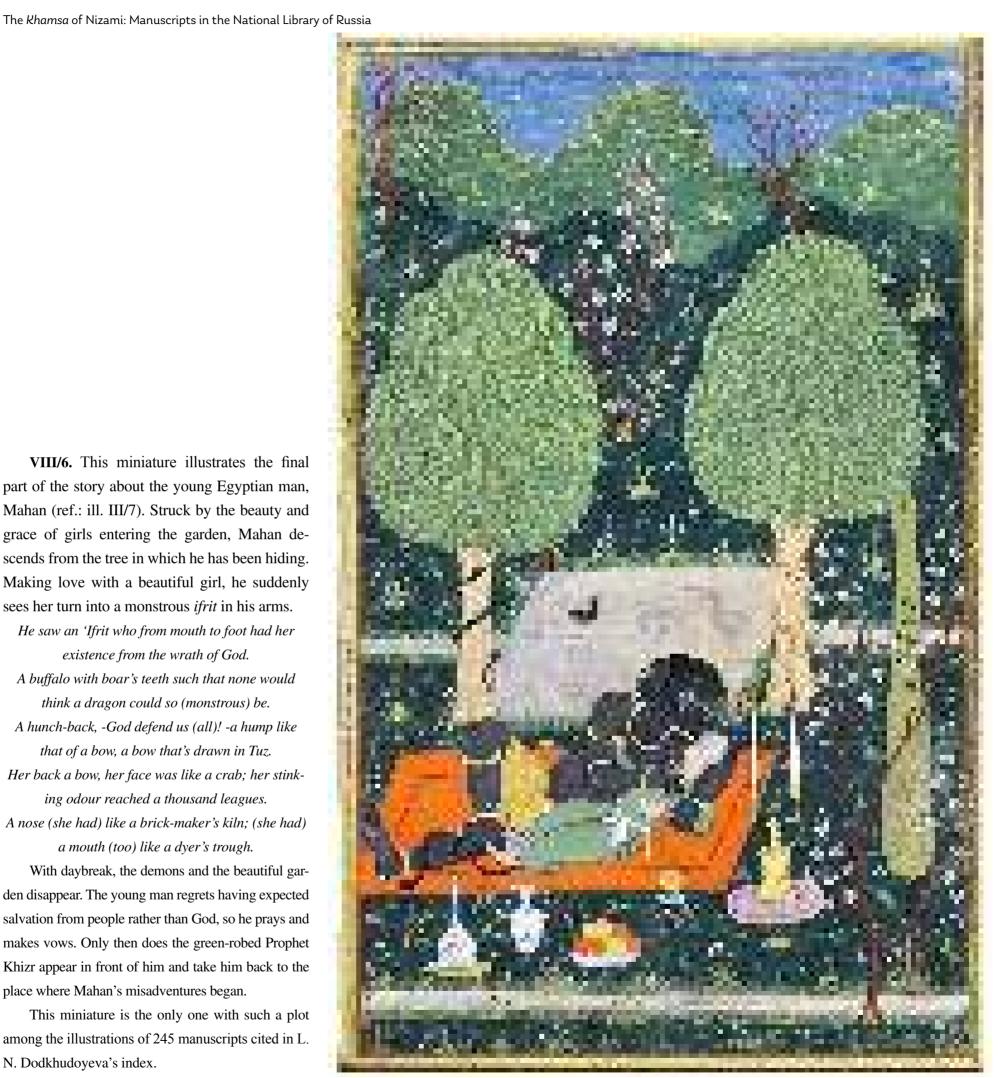




VIII/5. Leyli meets Majnun. PNS 66, f.96v.

VIII/5. In referring to the death of Bin Salam, Leyli's husband, many manuscripts also have a chapter describing her rendezvous with Majnun. This fragment is considered by researchers to be a later interpolation, but the dramatic nature of the scene made it very attractive for miniature artists. Majnun is brought to Leyli's nomad camp at her request, she kisses his feet (this moment is pictured in the miniature) and the lovers faint. Regaining consciousness, they talk of their love.





VIII/6. Mahan and the ifrit on the bed. PNS 66, f.166.

VIII/6. This miniature illustrates the final part of the story about the young Egyptian man, Mahan (ref.: ill. III/7). Struck by the beauty and grace of girls entering the garden, Mahan descends from the tree in which he has been hiding. Making love with a beautiful girl, he suddenly sees her turn into a monstrous ifrit in his arms.

He saw an 'Ifrit who from mouth to foot had her existence from the wrath of God.

A buffalo with boar's teeth such that none would think a dragon could so (monstrous) be.

A hunch-back, -God defend us (all)! -a hump like that of a bow, a bow that's drawn in Tuz.

Her back a bow, her face was like a crab; her stinking odour reached a thousand leagues.

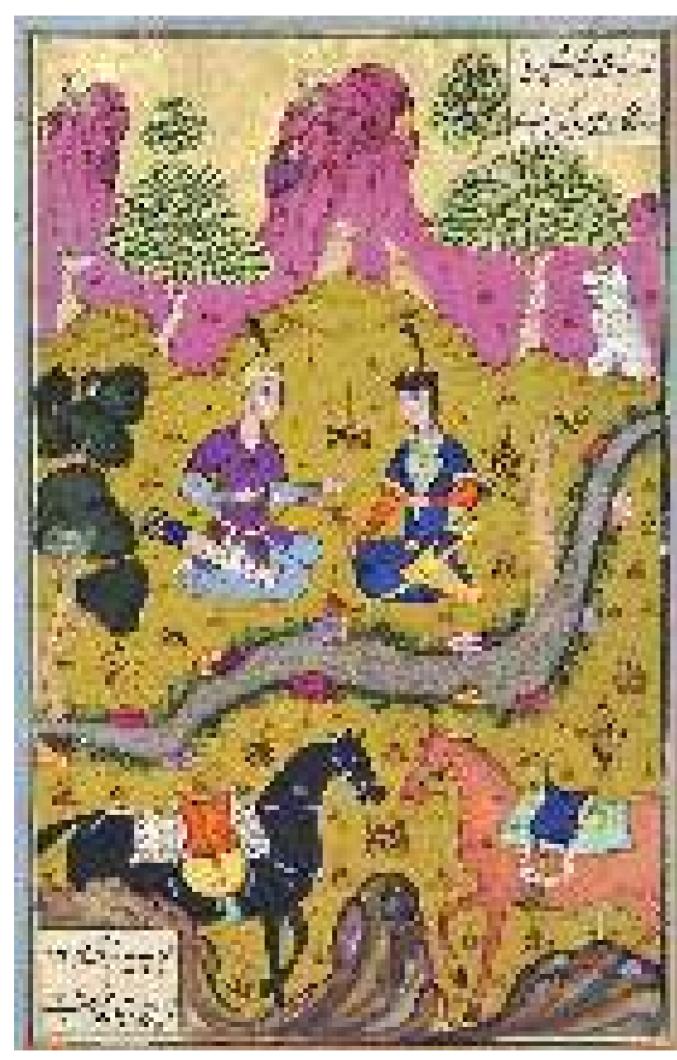
A nose (she had) like a brick-maker's kiln; (she had) a mouth (too) like a dyer's trough.

With daybreak, the demons and the beautiful garden disappear. The young man regrets having expected salvation from people rather than God, so he prays and makes vows. Only then does the green-robed Prophet Khizr appear in front of him and take him back to the place where Mahan's misadventures began.

This miniature is the only one with such a plot among the illustrations of 245 manuscripts cited in L. N. Dodkhudoyeva's index.





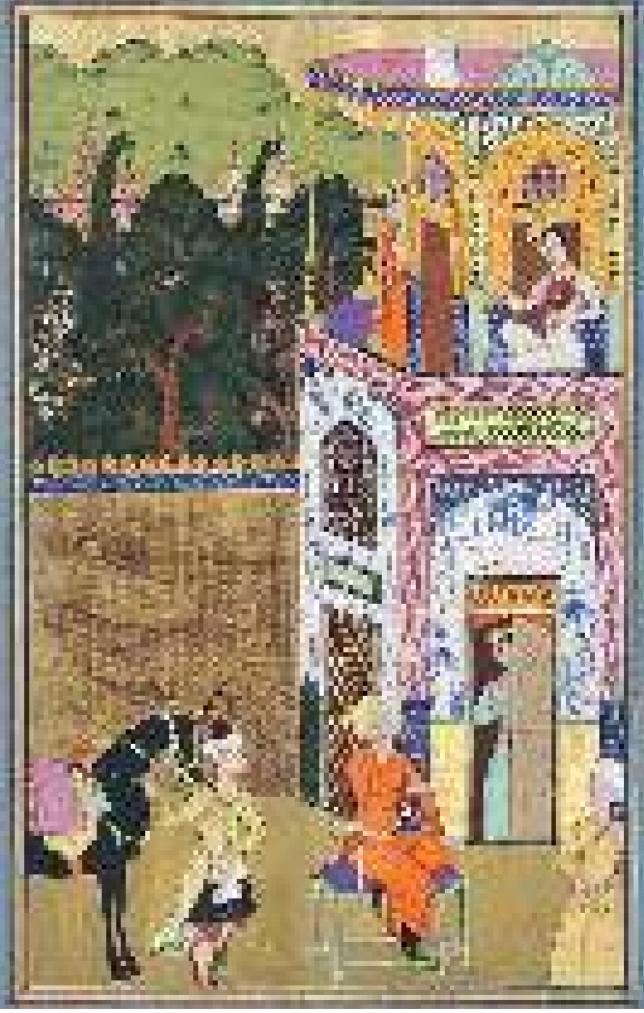


VIII/7. Khosrow and Shirin's conversation during the hunt. PNS 66, f.216.

VIII/7. Forced to flee Safavid Iran because of a conspiracy plotted by his military commander Bahram Chubine, Khosrow goes hunting and comes across Shirin. This is their first face-to-face meeting: they have seen each other only in portraits and in a glimpse at the spring. Recognizing each other, the lovers are overcome and faint; regaining consciousness, they sit and talk. In the miniature, the characters are depicted sitting on the steppe; their saddled horses, Gulgun and Shabdiz, stand in the foreground.

For a long time, they looked at each other until tears streamed from their eyes.

[Khosrow] Parviz could not take his eyes off Shirin, Gulgun would not leave Shabdiz.



VIII/8. Having lost his wife Maryam, Khosrow falls in love with the beautiful girl Shakar, a native of Isfahan. Insulted, Shirin retires to her castle; Khosrow, gnawed by his conscience, arrives at the castle. Shirin, however, does not let him in; she makes him sit at the gate and talks to him from a window. Answering Khosrow's question as to why she does not open the door for him, she reproaches him for his disrespect towards her and his fascination with the beautiful Shakar. Shirin urges Khosrow:

Become a [true] ruler who is content with one ball [when playing polo];

> Do not be like a Hindu [juggler] who plays with ten balls! ...

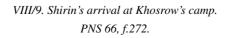
I have only one qibla (direction to which a Moslem turn when praying, i.e., towards Mecca), that is,

> your face, but you have a thousand qiblas apart from mine...

I will retire to my domain of sorrow; I will keep my purity, like a pearl.

> VIII/8. Khosrow at the foot of Shirin's castle. PNS 66, f.262v.







VIII/9. When, after numerous reproaches, Khosrow leaves Shirin's castle and returns to his camp, the latter comes to regret her resolution and harsh words. Unable to stand another parting, she saddles Gulgun and leaves the palace, following "the narrow path, like the arc of her eyebrows, into the night, dark like the blackness of her braids". She arrives at Khosrow's camp deep in the night; 'intoxicated' by the moonlight, the king's suite and guards are sleeping. Only Shapur sees Shirin coming; he approaches her with the question:

O peri-faced, who are you? If you're not a peri, why are you walking here?

\

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VIII/10. Despite Shirin's request, Khosrow drank wine during the marriage feast and got so drunk that they had to carry him to the bedroom. Shirin decides to teach him a lesson, so she does not go to him, but instead sends her relative, an ugly old woman. The old woman is dressed like a bride as Shirin wants to know if her groom is in possession of his faculties and whether he could, "distinguish between the moon and the cloud". But the shah is so drunk that "the sky was like a thread in his eyes." He realizes, however, that it is not Shirin before him, and thinks:

"Who is this admirer of the dragon? Is it a nightmare or a hallucination?

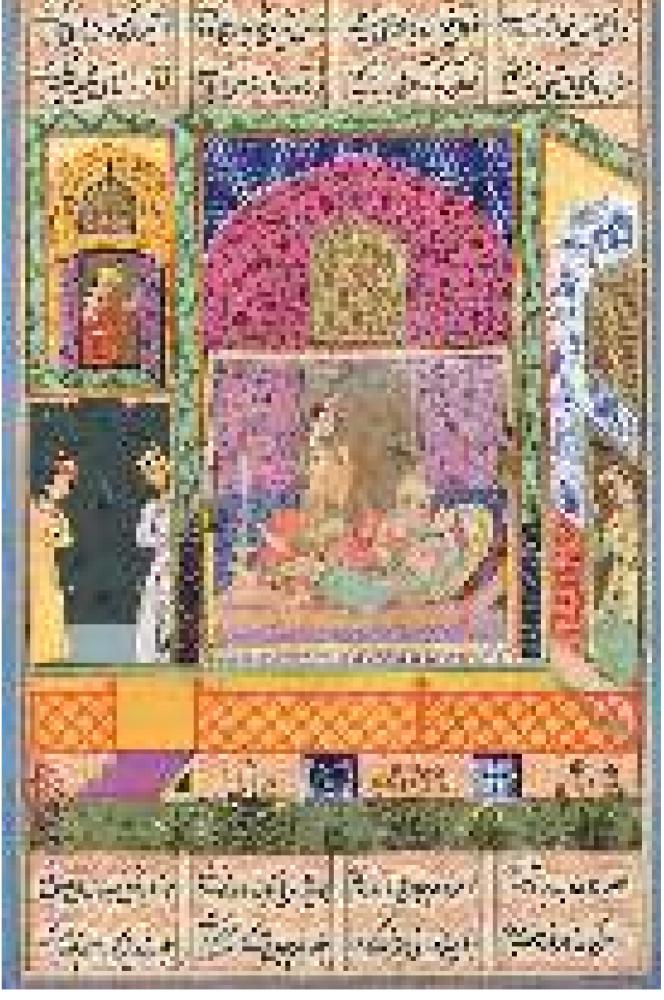
This sour-faced, hunchbacked woman is not sweeter than Shirin, who killed me with her frown!"

But since he was led astray by the debauchery ghoul, he thought that this old woman was his wife.

Drunk he reached out his hands for her: the howl

Drunk, he reached out his hands for her: the bowl and the bottle fell down, both broke!

Appearing from behind the curtain, Shirin hurries to help the old woman. Having seen her beauty, the stunned Khosrow falls asleep. He wakes at dawn, and the lovers finally come together.



VIII/10. Khosrow and Shirin in the bridal chamber (Khosrow on the bed with an old woman). PNS 66, f.281v.





VIII/11. King Filiqus finds Iskandar. PNS 66, f.311. (See: the caption to ill. VII/2)



VIII/12. Hearing the boasts of the mighty Zangi warrior Zaraj, in response Iskandar threatens him and charges.

When he (Sikandar) had uttered

When he (Sikandar) had uttered
this speech, he stood in the stirrup,
Raised the arm; loosed the rein
(gave rein to the steed):
Assaulted him like the raging lion,
A mace (the head) of lion form in his hand.
From the severity with which he struck
the mace on his (Zaraj's) head,
Fever-trembling fell upon
the mountain Alburz (Zaraj).
With one wound (blow) of that mace of hard steel
He took the life of that ebony-tree.



VIII/12. Iskandar's battle with the Zangi.

PNS 66, f.318v.

(See the description to ill. III/8)





VIII/13. A dragon attacks Iskandar's army. PNS 66, f.343v.

VIII/13. Having invaded Achaemenid Iran, Iskandar destroyed fire temples, seized their treasures, and eradicated the magicians' beliefs and customs, thereby bringing people to monotheism. Razing heathen temples in Babylon and Azerbaijan to the ground, the king arrived in Isfahan, where beautiful priestesses led by the sorceress Azar-Humayun attended a large fire temple. She showed the people the illusion of a fire-breathing dragon over the walls of the temple.

The witch, with her spells, conjured
a dragon to those people.

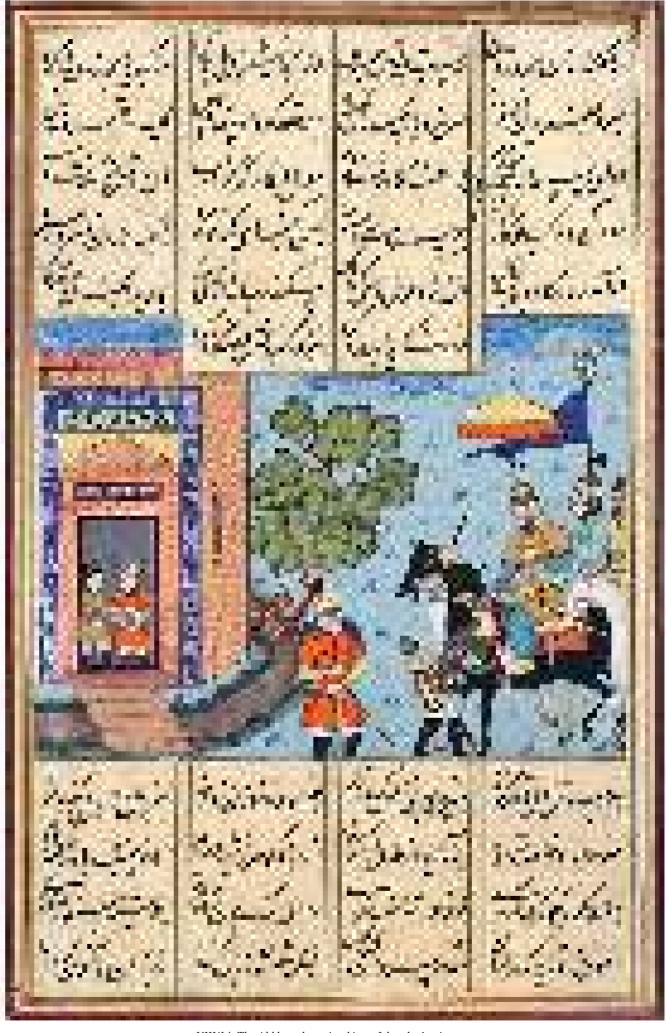
Seeing the fire-breathing dragon,
people were frightened of the fire.

Fearing it, falling and rising again,
they ran to Iskandar:

"There is a dragon in the fire temple,
like Greek fire it sets fire to people!
Should anyone come close to that dragon,
they will either be killed or eaten up in a second!"
Her spells were broken by Bulinas, who was versed in sorcery.

VIII/14. Completing his military campaign in the Arab lands and making a pilgrimage to the Ka'ba, Iskandar then returns to Iraq. The ambassador from the land of Azarabadagan informs him that people in the lands of Arman and Abkhaz still practise fire worship; the latter are led by the powerful and brave warrior Duval. Iskandar goes north, conquers Arman and thence continues to Abkhazia to counter Duval. The latter learns that the king is approaching and leaves the palace to meet him, kisses his hand as a sign of obedience and offers ample gifts.

Davali, army leader of the land of Abkhaz, When he knew that the monarch of Rúm had come, Quickly bound his loins with the leather strap of fidelity (to Sikandar); Washed his illumined heart from malice towards the king. Like those versed in affairs, he dispatched the escort For the kissing of the hand of the world king: Took much valuable treasure; Entrusted it to the Khusrau's treasure-keepers: Entered the court and kissed the dust; Purified his heart of the claim of hostility. Sikandar, world-possessor, world-wanderer, When he saw such manliness on the part of the noble man, Gave (displayed) to him the path of courteousness; Gave him the place near his throne.



VIII/14. The Abkhaz champion kisses Iskandar's stirrup. PNS 66, f.351.







VIII/15. King Kayd sends gifts to Iskandar. PNS 66, f.370.

VIII/15. Set on conquering India, Iskandar dispatched a wise envoy to the Indian king Kayd. Intimidated, Kayd promised Iskandar four valuable gifts: his own daughter, a wise philosopher, a skilful doctor, and a magical cup that was always full. Iskandar's adviser Bulinas went out to retrieve the gifts.

Besides these four precious ornaments,

Other valuable articles, heart-pleasing,
Of treasure, and gold, and jewels, and of the ruby,

and the pearl, -

Of elephants many a back full of (laden with) treasure,

Of steel of Hindustan many loads:
Of aloe (-wood) and of amber in ass-loads:
Like moving mountains, forty large elephants,
Beyond whose navel the river Nile passed not.
For the king's throne, three white elephants,
At which (in envy) the enemy's face became black.

VIII/16. Iskandar goes on a hunt. PNS 66, f.372.

VIII/16. From India, Iskandar moved on to China. Crossing Tibet, he approached the Chinese border in a place with many rivers, lush vegetation and wild animals. Iskandar and his army took some rest, and the king went on a hunt.

When the king passed by that

hunting-place (in Chin), With the dust of that hunting-ground he became per-perfumed... *The world-seeker went like the roaring lion;* The leaper, the hunting lion, beneath him! In the desert of Chin, game-overthrowing, He made void the land of the wild ass and the deer. By his forked arrow, side-cleaving,

Many a deer cast the musk from its navel (fell). The hide of the deer, buttocks to head,

Became like a gold-mine with the golden arrow. The king's bow ambush made,

A deer cast down with every arrow.

With the painting of the notch of the willow-arrow Made void of colour the plain of Chin.

For hunting wild beasts in that hunting-place,

The king passed a day until the night.







VIII/17. Miniature: Iskandar and the captured Div of the Rus.

PNS 66, f.395v.

(See: description to ill. III/9)

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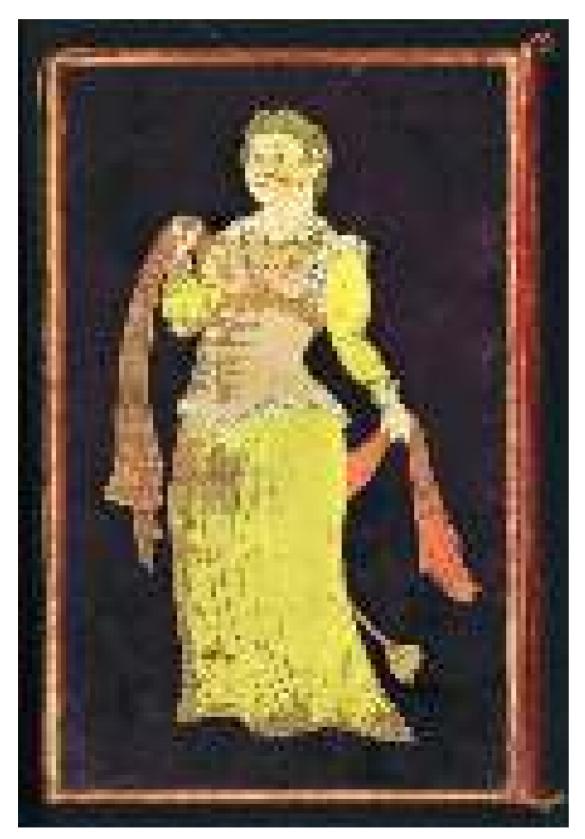
VIII/18. Khizr and Ilyas at the Fountain of Life. PNS 66, f.406. (See: description to ill. VI/5)

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of Life.

At that fountain-head they spread the table-cloth; For a fountain renders food pleasant-tasting. On that bread, which was more fragrant than musk, Was a dry salted fish. From the hand of one of those two of auspicious beauty (externally and internally), The fish fell into the limpid water. In the water of turquoise colour, the endeavourer Endeavoured that he might bring the fish to his grasp. When the fish came into his hand it was alive; To the inquirer – happy was the omen! He knew that that fountain, soul-refreshing, Came his guide to the water of life. He drank the water of life with joy; Obtained everlasting permanency in life: Verily, he acquainted his friend; So that he also drank water of that drinking-water.





VIII/19. Upper cover of the binding, outer. PNS 66.



VIII/20. Upper cover of the binding, inner. PNS 66.

18th century (there is a note with the date 1118/1706–1707 in the margin of f.233).

233 ff., 23x13 cm. Laid oriental paper, thin, sized and polished, of greyish shade. Text in 2 columns, 15x7.5 cm, 17 lines per page. Calligraphic *nasta'liq* script. Black ink; headings in blue ink.

30 miniatures; 1 *unvan* headpiece; text in a frame of gold and blue lines, columns separated by a floral ornamental strip on a gold background, the space within the frame is covered with gold speckles; the double-page is united by a *kamand* frame with the same ornamentation; section headings are inscribed in gold cartouches surrounded by a blue background with golden flowers; illumination on the last page.

A lacquered cover with floral ornamentation on both inner and outer. The spine is of green shagreen. A wrap of white cotton fabric with an ink Persian inscription, *Khosrow and Shirin* by Sheikh Nizami, *illustrated*; pinned to the case is a round tag with the inscription "His Royal Highness Emir of Bukhara. 1913 His Imperial Majesty Division III No.1".

The first blank sheet (f.III) at the beginning of the manuscript displays an effaced inscription; on f.4, the title of the poem is written in Persian next to the number of miniatures in the manuscript. On f.1 a poem is inscribed in Persian and in praise of the four "righteous caliphs." Captions to the plots are inscribed in the margins next to the miniatures. The ex-libris of the Winter Palace library is glued onto the last sheet.

Acquisition: the gift of the Amir of Bukhara Sayyid 'Alim Khan to Nicholas II, 1913.

References: Сборник РПБ, р. 4, No. 19; Костыгова 1988, р. 140, No. 392; Адамова-Грек 1976, pp. 80, 195-208, ill. 55-61.







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IX/1. Unvan headpiece and the beginning of the poem Khosrow and Shirin.

PNS 306, ff.2v-3r.

IX/2. This miniature is placed in the section praising the Prophet Muhammad and it depicts his ascension (Mi'raj) mentioned therein.

His sandals are the crown for the heavenly throne; He is the keeper of revelation and possessor

of the mystery of Mi'raj!

One night, the Archangel Jabra'il appeared before Muhammad, and a spiritual being called Buraq carried the Prophet from Mecca to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, from where he ascended to Heaven, reaching the divine throne. In miniatures the Prophet is usually depicted sitting on Buraq, a creature with the body of a horse, head of a woman, and a tail uncharacteristic of a horse, which is surrounded by celestial bodies and angels. Both this and similar miniatures from manuscripts of Nizami's *Leyli and Majnun* (Hermitage, VP-936) and Jami's *Yusuf and Zulaykha* (NLR, PNS 248) depict Buraq without a rider.



IX/3. Upon his accession to the throne, Hurmuzd would reign according to the customs of his father Khosrow Anushirvan. In response to his prayers, God sent him a son.

For such abundant donations and vows the Lord gave
him a male child, and what a child!
A precious pearl from the sea of reign,
a bright light of divine effulgence;
Born under a blessed star, the lucky possessor of the
throne, who is destined to wield a crown
and assume the throne.
The father saw that his royal signs were perfect, and



- - -

IX/4. By chance, Khosrow sees Shirin bathing in the spring.

A peacock-like eagle on a leash (i.e., the horse Shabdiz), a pheasant sitting on the shore of Kousar!

[The horse] slowly nibbled the grass under its hooves; in that silence he [Khosrow] repeated quietly:

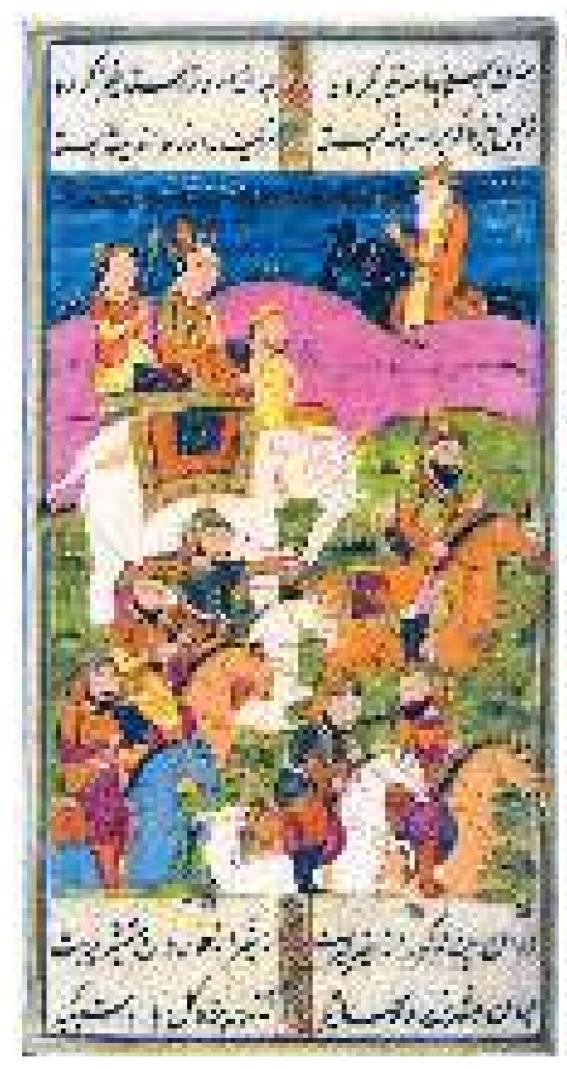
"What would happen if this idol was my beloved! And what would happen if this horse was mine!"

IX/4. Khosrow sees Shirin at the spring.

PNS 306, f.44v.

(See: description to ill. I/3)





IX/5. Khosrow's battle with Bahram Chubine.

PNS 306, f.82.

(See: description to ill. III/4)



IX/6. Lower cover, outer.
PNS 306





IX/7. Lower cover, inner with ex-libris of the Winter Palace library.

PNS 306

Chapter X

The *Khamsa* of Nizami: the Institute of Manuscripts of Azerbaijan

he Muhammad Fuzuli Institute of Manuscripts (previously the Republican Manuscripts Foundation) was established in 1950 from the Manuscripts department of the Nizami Institute of Literature under the auspices of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences as an independent scientific centre to collect, systematize, study, translate and publish medieval manuscripts.

In the Soviet era, the Institute of Manuscripts' development into a modern scientific and research centre was associated with the name Heydar Aliyev.

There were several manuscript centres in Soviet republics at that time; among them the centres in Leningrad, Tashkent and Dushanbe, which boasted abundant collections and scientific work; however, there were only two Institutes of Manuscripts in the Caucasus: The K. Kekelidze Institute of Manuscripts in Tbilisi and the Matenadaran in Yerevan.

Thanks to the initiative and work of Azerbaijani intelligentsia, Heydar Aliyev, then the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party, issued a resolution in 1982, according to which the beautiful architectural monument accommodating the Supreme Soviet was handed over to the Manuscripts

Foundation. This building had been established by the renowned philanthropist Zeynalabdin Taghiyev early in the 20th century as the first state-of-the-art girls' school in the Orient. On 4 December 1986, Aliyev, who by then was First Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, facilitated the foundation of the Institute of Manuscripts from the Republican Manuscripts Foundation. Exactly one decade later, the same Heydar Aliyev, now President of the independent Republic of Azerbaijan, issued the decree naming the Institute after our great poet and philosopher Muhammad Fuzuli.

The Institute of Manuscripts collection comprises materials from medieval libraries and madrasas, including Bahman Mirza Qajar's library, as well as the private collections of Azerbaijani celebrities of the 19th and 20th centuries: Abbasgulu Agha Bakikhanov, Mirza Fatali Akhundov, Abdulgani Afandi Khalisagarizade, Huseyn Afandi Gayibov, Mirza Muhammad Gayibov, Mir Mohsun Navvab, Salman Mumtaz, Yusif Vezir Chamanzaminli, Uzeyir Hajibeyov, Suleyman Sani Akhundov, Mammad Said Ordubadi etc. Some of the valuable manuscripts preserved for centuries by the Azerbaijani intelligentsia were destroyed during the years of oppression, 1937–38. Some manuscripts, however, were hid-







den in the roofs and walls of houses, and thus saved for future generations.

After the 1950s, the collection of manuscripts continued, and this treasury has grown. As the Institute of Manuscripts was being established as an independent scientific institution, many manuscripts, old books printed in Arabic, historical documents and other archaeographic materials from various cultural and educational organizations and libraries were assembled. The Muhammad Fuzuli Institute of Manuscripts is currently known for one of the richest collections of manuscripts across the post-Soviet space; it has valuable ancient, even unique, written materials in the Arabic, Persian, and Turkic languages whose scientific significance, content and artistic design draw foreign specialists to its doors.

The Institute of Manuscripts has a rich and valuable collection of materials in Turkic, Arabic, Persian, and other languages covering all aspects of medieval science: medicine and pharmacy, mathematics, astronomy, chemistry and mineral science, Sufism and philosophy, theology and law, history and geography, linguistics and dictionary science, prose fiction and poetry. Today the Institute holds a collection of approximately 40,000 books and documents; 7,000 works in Arabic, 4,000 in

Persian, and 1,500 in Turkic languages. Most of these manuscripts were written or copied between the 14th and 20th centuries. The collection also includes personal archives, historical documents, archaeographic materials, old print books belonging to prominent Azerbaijani scientists and authors of the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as old newspapers and magazines, microfilms and photocopies of manuscripts held overseas.

The oldest manuscript held here includes several *ayats* from Surah "*An-Nisa*" of the Qur'an; it is written on leather and dates back to the 9th century CE.

The Institute's core activity is the study and publication of written works related to the culture of Azerbaijan, and there have been valuable studies of our nation's written art. Such prominent specialists as Mammadagha Sultanov, Jahangir Gahramanov, Hamid Arasli, Rustam Aliyev, Azizagha Mammadov and Jannat Naghiyeva worked here between the 1950s and 1980s in passionate studies of documents representing our national and spiritual heritage. We should particularly note the merits of Rustam Aliyev, a great orientalist and Honorary Professor of Harvard University, whose studies conformed fully with modern academic standards. It was at his initiative and guidance that the scientific description and







The Khamsa of Nizami: the Institute of Manuscripts of Azerbaijan



cataloguing of the Arabic, Persian, and Turkic language manuscripts held in the Institute commenced, resulting in the production of 3 volumes of Arabic, 3 volumes of Persian and 2 volumes of Turkic manuscript catalogues. Professor Azada Musabeyli prepared the 3-volume catalogue of manuscripts of works by Azerbaijani writers that are in foreign museums and libraries. A number of written materials have been studied and translated. This work is now continued by the new generation of scientists and researchers; the Institute has boasted manuscript researchers such as Kamandar Sharifov, Mammad Adilov, Mahira Guliyeva, Mohsun Naghisoylu and Nasib Goyushov.

It is generally accepted that the first language of Islamic science and culture is Arabic, the second Persian and the third Turkic. Many of the oriental written artefacts held in the Institute, created for historical and traditional reasons in the Persian language, represent the spiritual heritage of the nations that created them. Great Azerbaijani poets like Nizami Ganjavi, Khagani Shirvani, Mahmud Shabustari, Ahvadi Maraghai, Assar Tabrizi and many other masters of the art would write in Persian. The Persian literary language was considered their second language by Imadaddin Nasimi, Muhammad Fuzuli and other famous writers. Many celebrated people across Central Asia and Turkey would write in that language. The Persian manuscripts encompass the historical and cultural heritage of Iran and Afghanistan as well as those of other nations across the Middle East, Central Asia and India.

Important for us are encounters with the very stylish artistic design of miniature art in medieval books, perfectly formed in Persian manuscripts. It is no coincidence that the majority of illustrated and artistically decorated works held in the world's collections are Persian and Persian-language manuscripts. This is due in part to the variety of content and topics and the particularly rich story lines in the poems, sagas, legends, myths and fables; but also due to the evident interest exhibited in book decoration and high aesthetic taste. There are many valuable works in the Institute of Manuscripts that are unique in their beautiful decoration. Among them are a Bustan by Sa'adi (Herat, 15th century), Shahin's Divan (also Herat, 16th century), as well as works from the collection that belonged to the Azerbaijani poetess Khurshudbanu Natavan and exquisite copies of the Qur'ani-Karim (Shiraz, 16th century).

As Yevgeny Berthels correctly pointed out in 1947, libraries around the world held many manuscripts comprising the whole *Khamsa* or at least some of its *masnavis* (rhyming couplets) created by Nizami Ganjavi, the great Azerbaijani poet of the 12th century. The Leningrad manuscripts collection (now Saint Petersburg, The National Library of Russia) alone can boast more than twenty exquisite copies; Tashkent and Dushanbe, as well as Eastern and Western European book collections have over six hundred manuscripts. Not all of the copies are considered valuable or significant from the standpoint of text and artistic design. But many among them are valuable in all respects; thus, the great importance of acquiring these copies for study.







Most of the Nizami *Khamsa* manuscripts in the Institute of Manuscripts were copied by professional calligraphers and illustrated by miniature painters from the 15th–18th centuries. Of these copies, 12 are complete and 10 incomplete. The pictures and miniatures of five manuscripts are listed below:

- 1. Acc. no. M-156 copy, date of copying: 4 Rabi[°] al-Awwal AH 1033/25 December 1643; 43 miniatures.
- 2. Acc. no. M-207 copy, date of copying: 1046 AH/1636; 11 miniatures.
- 3. Acc. no. M-372 copy, date of copying: 10 Dhu'l-Qi'dah AH 1037/11 July 1628; 16 miniatures.
- 4. Acc. no. M-374 copy, date of copying: AH 1102–1103/1691–1692; 44 miniatures.
- 5. Acc. no. M-130 copy, date of copying: 18th century; 24 miniatures.

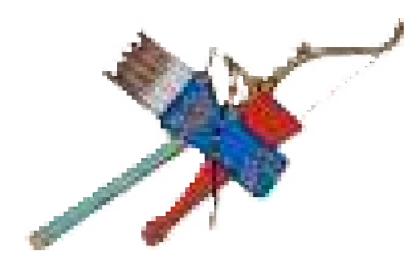
Of great interest among the *Khamsas* in the Institute of Manuscripts collection is the manuscript acc. no. M-207. The scientific value of this manuscript is explained by the fact that upon completing the copying in 1636, the calligrapher Dust Muhammad ibn Darwish Muhammad Daraktchi performed a sort of textological study by comparing it with another older copy of *Khamsa*, indicating differences between the two, and highlighting missing words in red.

The manuscript is also interesting for its artistic decoration and codicology. Each *masnavi* begins with an *unvan* featuring bright colours and fine ornamentation in gold ink. The text is written in readable *naskh* script.

There are 11 miniatures (*folios*: 53b, 65a, 73b, 76b, 92b, 106a, 113a, 150b, 188b, 227a, and 235a) in the manuscript that are representative of the Isfahan school; research into this manuscript is of ultimate importance in the context of 17th century miniatures.

As we know, the Shiraz school existed between the early 14th and the 17th centuries, which is the subject of our study. Shiraz eventually drew closer to the Isfahan style, the last of the classical period. Over that period, Shiraz, apart from its mastery of the craft, it had always possessed high technical skill, would not have a mainstream style of its own, but had very capable copyists. In any event, what we see in our manuscript is a profound imitation of Isfahan style. This is also reflected in the manuscript sample mentioned above.

The large miniatures illustrating the acc.no.M-207 *Khamsa* manuscript present well-known plots from the masterpiece. One is *Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing*. Artists of the different schools illustrated this famous scene at different times using a variety of artistic forms and distinctive new features. As with artistic depictions of other storylines, the picture of this one provides a certain, albeit limited, freedom of expression. So, the manuscript acc.no.M-207 represents an attempt by an unknown artist to escape the traditional composition by drawing only the bathing Shirin, without Khosrow. This miniature attracts for its fresh, rich scenery, and shows the beautiful Shirin combing her hair. Such miniatures are yet further proof that even if the presentation and interpretation of a literary storyline follows a certain pat-



tern, this pattern could be changed if necessary, giving way to the expression of artistic ideas.

Immensely important among the non-traditional storylines (those featuring a third principal protagonist) that came to fine art from Nizami's works are the episodes showing the bravery of the legendary Farhad. Introduced to oriental poetry and miniature art in Nizami's poem, Farhad represented a type of character qualitatively innovative for the society of those times. His features represent a new type of person, a Renaissance man; he is a versatile craftsman, a skilful stone carver and engraver and, in addition, a freedom-loving, honest, noble, gallant and strong personality.

In the miniature *Farhad received by Khosrow* (manuscript acc. no.M-207) the tension is depicted by the movement of Khosrow's hand rather than according to the rules of drawing. Here, Farhad is received by Khosrow in a meadow; the picture depicts a fierce conversation between Khosrow, seated on a golden throne and surrounded by his court, and Farhad standing proudly before him. Artistically, this work is considered one of the best miniatures.

Nevertheless, the feature of particular interest is the interpretation of scenery, namely the depiction of expansive fields and meadows; this also applies to the unique, wave-shaped mountain ridges rising to the sky, which are drawn using a spot technique. Indeed, everything new is actually something long-forgotten from the past. There are a large number of small, light-yellow smudges outlining the different colours; they have been created

with very fine touches of a brush against the background of dark green grass.

With hindsight, we may relate such techniques to the miniatures created by Muhammadi. A prominent innovator in the fine arts, head of the Qazvin school, and, according to medieval sources, a son of the ingenious Sultan Muhammad, he was born following a short-term stay by the great Tabrizi master in Herat. Little is known about him from official chronicles, but all the artists of the day copied him extensively.

The spot technique (pointillism) with yellow grass against the dark green meadow background was Muhammedi's technique of choice; he would effectively use the nib of his brush to create the smudge effect.

Therefore, in the acc. no. M-207 *Khamsa* we see a very beautiful and high-quality work, imitating, or rather interpreting in its way - the Isfahan style. It is unique in its depiction of shapes, their size, and particularly in showing the colours of autumn that range from light yellow to dark green. Thus, the Baku *Khamsa* represents a quite interesting example of Shiraz miniatures dating back to the first half of the 17th century.

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Acc. no. M-207.
The Khamsa of Nizami.
ANAS Institute
of Manuscripts. Baku.
Date: 1636.
Place: Isfahan.

3/5

f. 150b.

Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing.

Longing to meet each other, the lovers move out: Khosrow to the land of Arman and Shirin to Madain. On her way, Shirin sees a spring and decides to bathe there and rest. Meanwhile, Khosrow, who has changed his clothes, passes by the spring. He doesn't see Shirin's face; the latter sees the man but does not realise that it is Khosrow. The lovers go their separate ways, failing to recognize each other.

f. 188b.

Farhad received by Khosrow.

This miniature depicts the scene in which Khosrow receives his rival, Farhad, in a meadow.

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f. 53b.

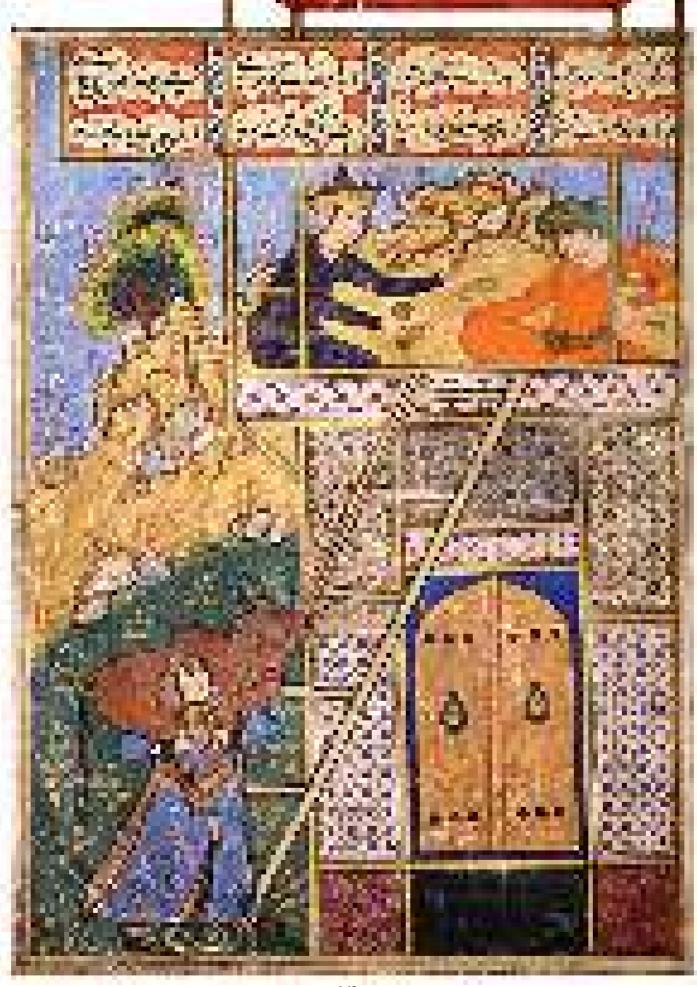
Bahram Gur hunting.

From his childhood, Bahram has been famous for hunting onagers and is therefore known by the name Bahram Gur (Gur - Onager).

While hunting, he sees a lion preying on an onager and fires a deadly shot that hits both animals with a single arrow.

The legendary courage he demonstrated was depicted by artists on the walls of the Khawarnaq palace.

The Khamsa of Nizami: the Institute of Manuscripts of Azerbaijan



f. 65a. Fitnah carrying the calf upstairs to Bahram Gur.





f. 113. Leyli and Majnun.

Acc. no. M-374. The Khamsa of Nizami.
ANAS Institute of Manuscripts.
Baku.
Date: AH 1102–1103/1691–1692 CE.

Therefore, in acc. no. M-207 *Khamsa* we can see a very beautiful and high-quality sample, which imitates, or rather interprets - in a way - the Isfahan style. It is unique in terms of depiction of shapes, their big size, and particularly in showing the colors of autumn that range between light yellow and dark green. Therefore, the Baku *Khamsa* represents quite an interesting example of Shiraz miniatures dated back to the first half of the 17th century.

Jamila Hasanzade Nasib Goyushov ---

Chapter XI

Contemporary Miniature Painting of Azerbaijan

he so-called 'miniature boom' in Azerbaijan began early in the 1980s. Back in 1982, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijan SSR Council of Ministers passed a resolution, "The Improvement of Book Publishing", followed by a decision at the June 1983 plenary session to develop national art systematically. Meanwhile, the Central Committee and Heydar Aliyev in person gave artists of the republic the task of restoring the medieval art of miniature painting. A number of important actions were taken to that end, with the establishment of a Miniature Painting section within the Republic's Union of Artists. It was soon realized, however, that such an important task could not be completed without identifying a number of essential factors.

Without going into details of the ancient and glorious history of Azerbaijani miniature painting, one important point should be made. Generally, little was known then about the history of miniature painting in the Middle East, its unique characteristics of style, and even less about its practitioners. Those interested in the art could only consult Russian (soviet) scientific publications.

In our society, special interest in miniature painting can be attributed to the exquisite album *Azerbaijani Miniatures*, compiled by the famous Azerbaijani artist Karim Karimov and published abroad in 1980. Following that significant event, the distinctive features of miniature painting gained in popularity and interest among professional artists and the middle class.

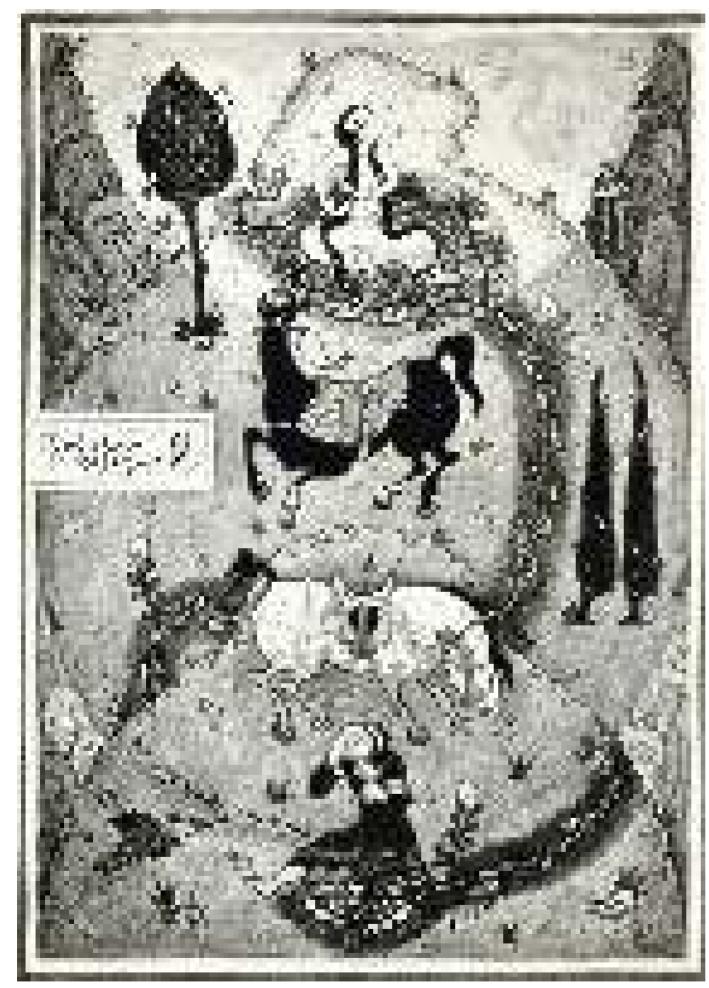
One of the book's greatest merits was that for the first time in the history of medieval miniature, paintings once branded 'Iranian miniatures' by experts and known as this around the world, were rightly presented as "Azerbaijani miniatures". In those years, this album was a must-have gift presented to honoured guests arriving in Baku; representatives of the republic took this book with them when going overseas and presented it to their foreign counterparts. Thus, no one would deny that all the excitement about miniature painting in our country was surely caused by the album *Azerbaijani Miniatures*.

To return now to the main point. Several questions had arisen by the time the revival of miniature painting commenced: is it feasible to revive this medieval oriental art at the end of the 20th century and bring it to modern people who gravitate towards and are raised on the graphic arts of the West? Aren't we missing something important here?

There can be no doubt that such work is not only about knowing the history of this ancient art, the names of famous practitioners, or the years in which they created their miniature paintings. Indeed, it would make no sense to do this work blindly, without any idea of the philosophy, aesthetic norms, colour perception, imaging of environment and people and the stylistics behind this art. Last but not least, we did not have the slightest idea about training and education, that is, where to start the painting and when to finish it, how to prepare the dyes, or what tools to use. A 'restoration' of miniature painting without all this would hardly seem likely.







Artist: Elchin Aslanov.

However, let us not depart from the main track. The task was set and they set about restoring the old miniature art and searching for new types of miniature. It became clear that the survival and development of traditional miniature painting in the context of contemporary art was by no means out of place, as miniature art and its style can live on as an alternative and specific branch.

While some members of the newly created Miniature Painting section began to work on miniature paintings based on medieval patterns, others set out on a new endeavour to create, in different ways, a modern interpretation of this ancient art. In truth, those who chose the second path were few.

An artist had to take a risk, either laying aside or completely rejecting their own individual style, in devoting themself to very serious and sophisticated research, and thereby creating in a new, completely different style and thus give new breath to the ancient art; something not many artists could ever do. Several artists, including Sanan Gurbanov, Adalat Bayramov, Rasim Nazirov and I took up the challenge, searching for the style we half-jokingly branded 'neo-miniatures' and works called 'neo-miniature compositions'.

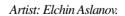
'neo-miniature' branch of modern art.

and arrive at a common understanding.

While composers processing our classic mughams resulted in the genre called symphonic mugham, our classical miniature art gave rise to the From the early days of my tenure as Head of the Miniature Art section of the Union of Artists, it has been my feeling that I assumed a very responsible and honourable task. Without knowing the rules, dogmas or concepts of classical miniature art, an artist would appear to be creating imitations blindfold, like an amateur. I began gathering information about miniature art; I read many books, pondered my colleagues' opinions and suggestions, and eventually concluded that I should share my knowledge and everything I had read with my section mates To this end, we launched a series of meetings we called "miniature sessions". During those meetings, we discussed different features of the art by re-

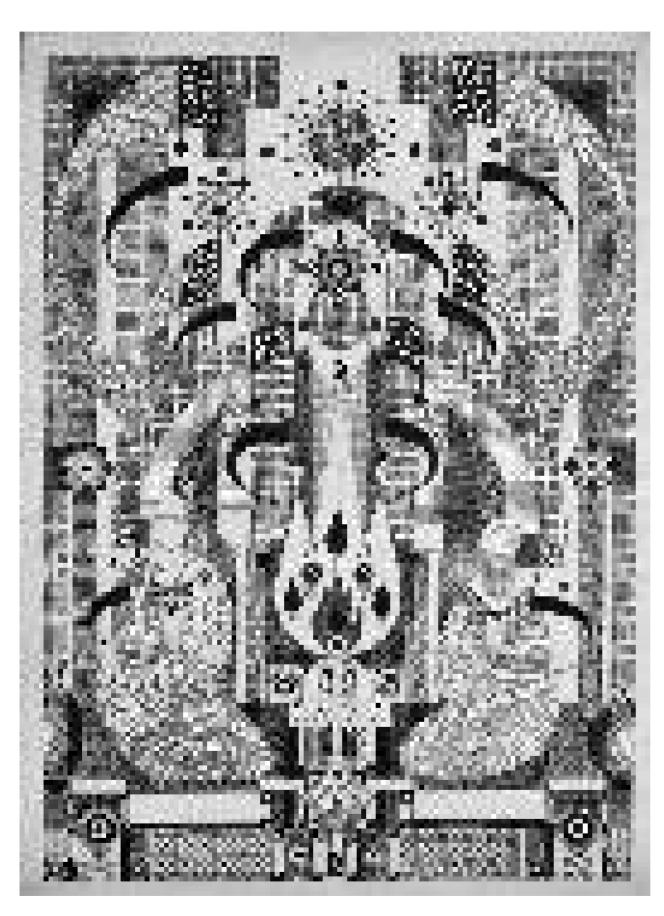
viewing slide presentations of paintings and trying to uncover their secrets. First of all, we attempted to clarify how the art related to the environment, that is, to water, stone, fire, and other elements; every-

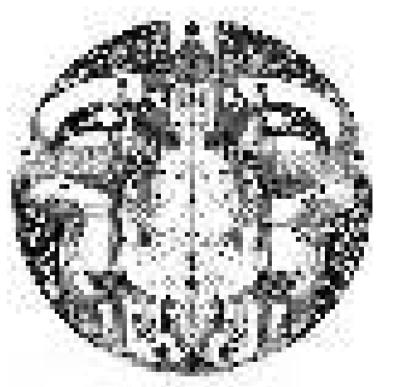
one shared their knowledge with their colleagues. The topic was then discussed in the newspaper Literature and Art and broadcast on TV.











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Artist: Sanan Gurbanov.

It so happened that a republic-wide painting contest 'Nizami Motifs' was announced at that time, so we decided to tailor our first meetings to that event. We held two meetings at the Republican Manuscripts Foundation with the participation of prominent scholars in order to get acquainted with Nizami's era and the poet's works. The topic of the first meeting, held on 12 May 1982, was, 'Fine Arts in Nizami's Era'; the second meeting, on 7 June 1982, was, 'Illustrations of Nizami's Works.' We familiarized ourselves with some examples and experience accumulated by the previous generation of artists who had produced artistic compositions based on Nizami's works; from that point, we discussed and tried to clarify how to perceive the subjects he raised from a modern standpoint. Should we abide by the tradition, or should a new principle be determined? Thoughts were shared on the modern embodiment and interpretation of new forms and paintings.

A third meeting was held again at the Manuscript Foundation (on 12 January 1983) on the theme 'Medieval Manuscripts'; the next meeting, on 3 March 1983 in the Art Gallery, discussed 'Artistic Features of Miniature Art'; further meetings included, 'Nature in Miniature Art', 'The Perception of the Planets in Miniature Art', 'Human Beings in Miniature Art', 'The Carpet in Miniature Art, the Miniature on a Carpet etc. A total of 15 meetings dedicated to various aspects of miniature art were held from 1982–1987.



Artist: Rasim Nazirov.





Artist: Rasim Nazirov.





Contemporary Miniature Painting of Azerbaijan



Artist: Rafis Ismaylov.







Artist: Rafis Ismaylov.

After some time, I arrived at the conclusion that ancient classical oriental literature and medieval miniature plots in general were having a negative effect on both contemporary miniature art and the search for its subjects and forms. If we intended to create an artistic style to match the aesthetic requirements of the Modern Human, our national art, and our life of the time, then we should leave behind associations with traditional oriental literature. A time would come when miniature art would return to those themes in a refreshed and newly-fashioned form.

On the other hand, it became clear that we had to follow the old miniature traditions by making our people and foreign guests aware of miniature paintings on the themes of the famous sagas, legends, fairy tales, ghazals, folk games (horse racing, *chovgan* and *zorkhana*) and old hunting scenes. It would also be advisable to embody some of our nation's sacred concepts and artefacts: 'Being //Existence // The Tree of Life', 'Holy Fire and Water' etc. in the shape of traditional miniature. I painted and exhibited a few miniature paintings on these topics, some of which are in the Nizami Museum.

As far as the language of contemporary miniature painting is concerned, some words should be spared about the great work done by the sculptor, theatre artist and producer Sanan Gurbanov, who managed, with his interesting and original paintings, to streamline miniature's descriptive language. My colleagues and I shared our impressions of Sanan's works during the Second Miniature Painting Exhibition, which took place on 28 May 1986. 25 years have passed, [this chapter is based on Elchin Aslanov's book of 2010] and my opinion of those works remains the same.

With those paintings, Sanan Gurbanov cleansed the medieval miniature of unnecessary, obsolete elements and created a modern-day embodiment, i.e., a simpler formula. Sanan had expedited the process and attained the goal we had set well in advance. It is known that no matter how simple and laconic the patterns and schemes look at first glance, such apparent "simplicity" requires plenty of effort, time and knowledge. His paintings Oriental Motifs, Improvisations on the Miniature etc. are true neo-miniature compositions.

It is not at all easy to recognize the simple scheme and extract the formula without cognition of the philoso-

phy and aesthetic rules or perception of the unique nature of the oriental miniature. With his clear understanding of those particularities, Sanan, like no-one else, managed to visually unveil the essence of the art and display the general features of the style we call "modern miniature / neo-miniature"; in his works, he cherishes a great hope and belief in the revival of medieval miniature into the fine arts. At the same time, he opposes the idea of a literal interpretation of an outmoded artistic environment; he urges no such repetition in contemporary art, but to work and live by concerns of today and not within the restricted boundaries of a single genre.



Artist: Naila Sultanova.







Artist: Naila Sultanova.

Apart from the miniature meetings, the Republican Miniature Exhibitions in 1982, 1984, 1986 and 1987 exhibited the creations of traditional miniature enthusiasts from across the republic who worked in different genres: ceramics, carpets, metal, sculpture etc. Such events brought all these works together in one single place, providing a complete overview of the style.

The exhibition 'Miniature 84' differed significantly from its predecessor, which was based on motifs from Nizami's works. This exhibition hosted more than 70 miniature-style works by 35 artists who worked in different artistic genres. The exhibition committee had set the objective to have

Contemporary Miniature Painting of Azerbaijan



an extensive conversation about contemporary and future miniature painting within the context of a variety of works. The 1984 exhibition provided good, clear and factual material to this end. Alongside some controversial works, the exhibition also featured experimental "neo-miniature" compositions. The event was both useful and important in the search for a new approach towards miniature's legacy, as well as the search for a new descriptive language and format.

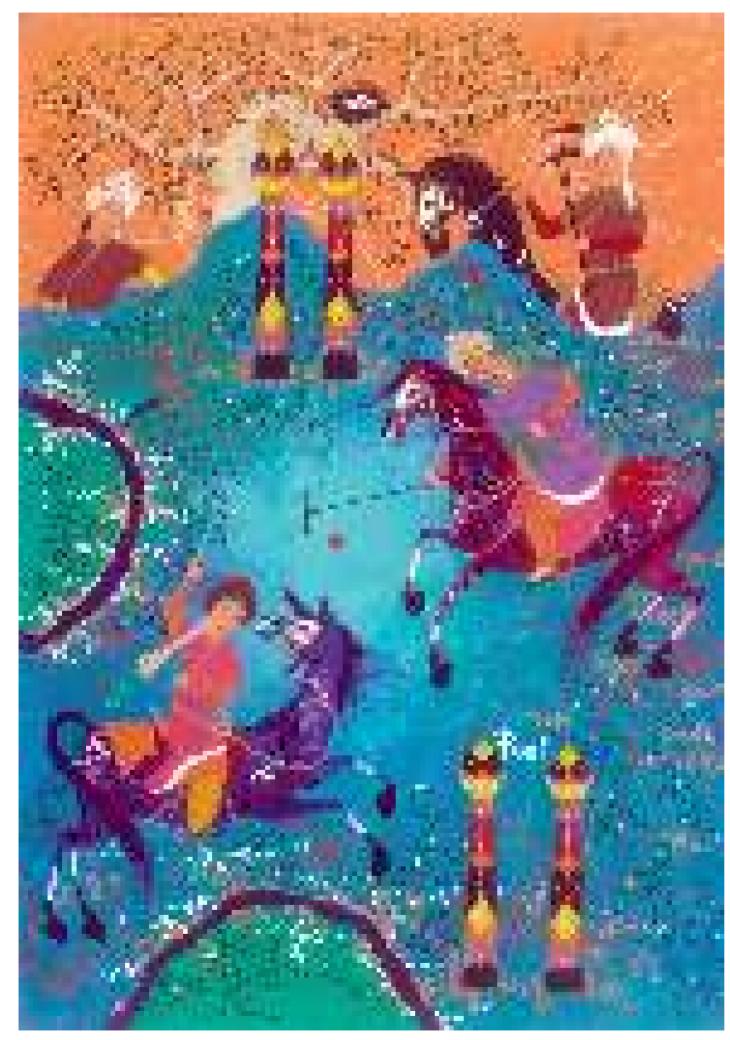
Artist: Parinisa Asgarova.

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Artist: Parinisa Asgarova.

The second Republican Exhibition of Miniature Paintings opened at the Miniature Centre, which began work on 26 March 1986 in Icherisheher (Old Town), Baku. We subsequently exhibited interesting neo-miniature compositions at an art show in Moscow (October 1986), displaying the first outcomes of this initiative to metropolitan artists. The distinctive *Oriental Motifs* by Sanan Gurbanov, the folk-art-like works of Adalat Bayramov, the serious and complex searchings of Rasim Nazirov, and works by other artists effectively outlined and shaped the generic features of contemporary Azerbaijani miniature art.

From the works shown at that exhibition, one may also conclude that the convention "miniature" had a quite conditional meaning.

It became crystal clear that miniature painting was not then mere decoration for a literary text, but something that, unrestricted by the tight boundaries of old books, had already penetrated the descriptive language of different genres: ceramics, painting, carpet weaving etc. The miniature therefore should be construed as an individual school of fine art or an artistic style like rococo, baroque, impressionism; such a construction should be based on its unique structure and specific expression of an environment, rather than literally on its small size.

Vast and important work was completed over that decade; since then, painting, graphic and sculptural works created in our republic have displayed an increasingly strong tendency and interest in national origins and sources. It is a clear sign of a "return to ancient roots, historical origins" and a "miniature boom" having deeply impressed our artists.

It became known later that Heydar Aliyev had not wished to restore miniature art simply as a work of revival; in fact, he had worried about the problem of national roots being dissociated from contemporary Azerbaijani painting and likewise underrepresenting national attributes.

His concerns were completely justified, as outstanding Azerbaijani artists of the 20th century graduated, as a rule, from the art schools of Moscow and Leningrad (St. Petersburg), their well-known works were nothing but a poor imitation of European art in form and style. While Azerbaijani culture, be it music or architecture, has always been a part of Middle Eastern culture and shared its spirit.

Aliyev called upon all contemporary Azerbaijani art to build upon the ancient miniatures and utilize their progressive features in creating unique and contemporary national works. Since it was not possible to say it openly



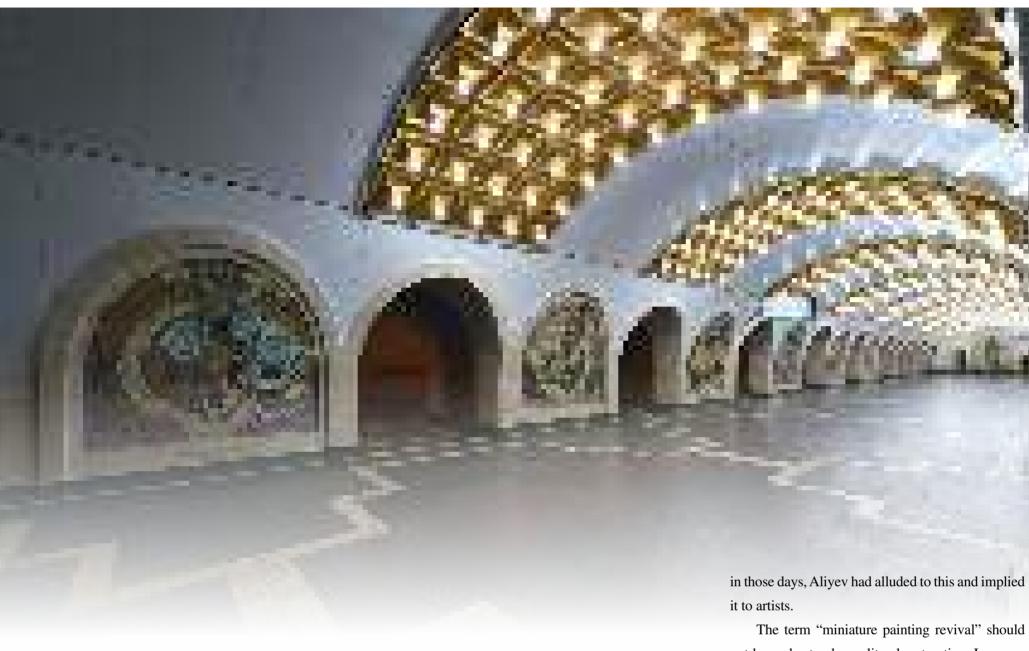
Nizami Metro Station.

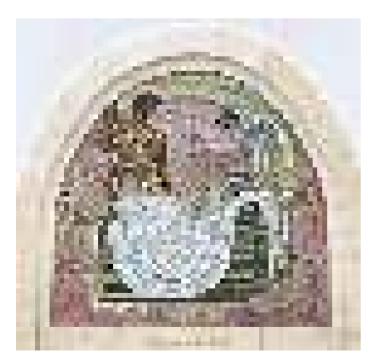
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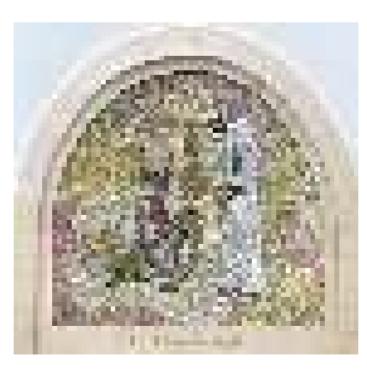
19 mosaic panels created from 1973–1976 by the artist Mikayil Abdullayev based on plots from the Khamsa.
18 of the 19 panels depict scenes from the five poems of the Khamsa; the last is the poet's portrait, over 3 metres in height.











The term "miniature painting revival" should not be understood as a literal restoration. Long research into ways and methods will be required to bring the miniature back into our lives and modern fine art, to adapt it to the rhythm, style, and taste of the times, and bring up to date its graphical language, extraordinary and unfairly forgotten.

Since one of the main purposes of fine arts is to artistically understand and visually express the visible world, oriental miniature painting also serves this purpose but, contrary to other genres of fine arts, it approaches this issue from its own particular standpoint, ancient traditions, beliefs and criteria. These rare features of the miniature increase our knowledge and perception of the world outside by providing unusual new interpretations and qualities. It is for these valuable features and rich history that miniature painting is so important for our time.

The Life and Works of Nizami Ganjavi

assumed that he was born in 1141. However, analysis of an autobiographical fact contained in the poem *Khosrow and Shirin* indicates the month and a different year for the poet's birth. In the section "In justification of the writing of this book", Nizami writes:

Do you know my horoscope?

In it I am a lion, but a creature of dust,

And if I am a lion, I am one made of wool...

(Nizami Ganjavi. Khosrow and Shirin. Translated by K. Lipskerov. Foreword and comments by Rustam Aliyev. Baku. Yazichi. 1983. p. 71.)

*Editor's note: Russian and Azerbaijani translations of the lines have deficiencies and do not fully reflect the poet's ideas.

فلک در طالعم شیری نمود ست ولی چون شیر پشمینم چه سود ست نه آن شیرم که با دشمن بر آیم مرا آن بس که من با من بر آیم

The stars have foretold my fate of lion,

But what's the use of that, if I'm a woollen one?

I'm not the lion that stands up to the foe,

I'm standing up to myself and that is fine with me.

In these two verses, Nizami complains first about the vicissitudes of life; in the next verse he summons up his will, his writing becomes optimistic in tone and hopeful about the future. The poet thanks his fate for being born under a lucky star. He came to this life to a fate as a man with a lion's courage; then, he writes with irony and inspiration that he is like a woollen lion that only looks like a real lion. What does this mean? This expression is a common one from Jalal ad-Din Rumi. In the past, people used to make woollen lions to perform in public events. The poet implies that although he was born under the sign of Leo, he is rather a soft toy, which renders meaningless the point of being a "lion". He then continues that a real lion can fight his enemies but, at best, all he (i.e., the poet) can do is fight with himself (inner struggle).

It clearly follows from these lines that the poet was born under the sign of Leo. In the same section, he states that he was forty when he began the poem:

You are forty years old; half of fragile life is over, Do not wrinkle your pleasing face when reading this story. (p. 69)

*Editor's note: forty years is the age of maturity. The poet implies that reaching the age of maturity is about expressing new ideas and thoughts.

Nizami began his poem in AH 575 and, as he indicated at the end of the book, finished it in AH 576:

Five hundred and seventy-six years flew by. And it is amazing that

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A beautiful face appeared in the happy glow. (p. 359)

*Editor's note: This is a figure of speech; the poet means that nobody has ever written such a poem before.

Hence it can be assumed that the poet was born in AH 535 under the sign of Leo. In AH 535, the sun was in Leo from 1-6 Muharram, which corresponds to 17-22 August 1140 CE. Thus, it can be stated with certainty that Nizami was born between 17 and 22 August 1140.

As mentioned above, Nizami was born in Ganja city, the ancient capital of Arran. He grew up and lived there almost continuously, and died and was buried there. Later, however, when the poet's works became widely popular, many a town claimed him as their own, just as seven Greek cities claimed the great Homer.

The poet's own name was Ilyas, his father's name was Yusuf, his grandfather and great-grandfather's names were Zaki ad-Din and Muayyad fid-Din, respectively. Zaki ad-Din means "purity of faith", and Muayyad fid-Din "Supported (by Allah) in the faith". Such titles in the medieval Orient were conferred, as a rule, on scholars and clerics. The poet was apparently born into a noble family. This is confirmed by the fact that Nizami's mother, the "Kurdish lady" ("Raisa-i kord"), was also descended from a noble family. His maternal uncle, Omar, bore the title "Khwaja", usually given to court dignitaries in the poet's time. It is most likely that he served at the Atabey court in Ganja. The poet assumed the alias "Nizami" which literally means, "the one who puts/strings the words in order".

*Editor's note: This alias is linked, inter alia, with the 1001 names of Allah; therefore, according to the abjad system of numerology, the sum of Arabic letters that constitute the word "Nizami" (פקלים) ("nun"+50+"za" =900+"alef"=1+"mim"=40+"yeh"=10) equals 1001, while the sum of letters that constitute his given name "Ilyas" (שופטלי) equals 102 ("alif"=1+"lam"=30+"yeh"=10+"alef"=1+"sin"=60), and if one subtracts "alif"=1 and "ba=2, i.e. 3, the result is 99 beautiful names of Allah.

The poet himself indicates that in a couplet from Leyli and Majnun:

در خط نظامی ار نهی گام بینی عدد هزار و یک نام والیاس کالف بری ز لامش هم با، نود و نه است نامش

The sobriquet "Nizami" that I've got,
Contains a thousand and one names.
And if we cut Alif and Ba from the Lam in Ilyas,
We come back to 99 names again

(Nizami Ganjavi. Leyli va Majnun. Tashih va sharh: Behruz Sarvatiyan. Tehran: Moesseseye-entesharate-Amir Kabir. 1394. p.63, 355)

The education Nizami received was excellent for those times. According to the rules of the day, Ilyas was first educated within the family. As a child (aged five) he learned the Holy Qur'an, which he was to cite repeatedly in his works. He also studied Qur'anic literature, Islamic law, the stories of the Prophet Muhammad, and the whole range of disciplines that constituted the concept of "adaba" (education). As a rule, descendants of wealthy families were dispatched to The Nizamiyyah, a famous theological school in Baghdad or to Damascus, Mecca and Cairo to continue their education. Nizami, however, did not leave; he chose to study in his hometown; in the 1150s, Ganja became the town of choice for many great scientists, poets, writers and architects from many countries. Judging by the books Nizami mentions,

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D.367. The Khamsa of Nizami. Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Date: 17th century.

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f. 172b.

Portrait (imaginary depiction) of Nizami in ornamented frame.

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he had access to manuscript lists of works in various fields of science, translations, interpretations of ancient writers, collections of poetry in Arabic and Persian that were kept in Ganja's libraries. Nizami engaged in thorough studies of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, astronomy, chemistry, mineralogy, medicine, logic, metaphysics, geography, history, poetics and versification. In the sciences he was most successful, as can be seen from his works, in medicine and astronomy.

Specialists are still amazed by Nizami's expansive knowledge of astronomy. In his poems Leyli and Majnun, The Seven Beauties etc., the poet lists and professionally characterizes the celestial bodies, many of which became known to European science only after the invention of the telescope. The spherical nature of the Earth, its movement round the Sun and rotation about its axis, the autonomy of each planet ("each star is a separate world that has its own earth and sky"), the structure of the "eternally turning firmament", the law of conservation of matter, the eternity of the universe, the essence of "the four elements" ... all these matters would occupy Nizami's inquisitive mind. He was even aware of Saturn having its own ring, discovered later by Galileo (G.D. Mammadbeyli. Nizami as an advanced scientist of his time. Nizami, Collection of Articles. Baku. 1940. p. 103 etc.). Such scientific facts, of course, were not discovered by Nizami himself, but the very fact of his knowing them is a sure sign that the poet was aware of all the scientific achievements of his time. By his own confession, "during his short life he read all the books", covering topics from the ring of Saturn to the centre of Earth and he became "a sea of knowledge of all subjects."

Unlike most of his contemporaries, Nizami would not study astronomy to do astrological calculations or to predict fate, but for the sake of grasping the secrets of nature. He did not believe in astrology or astrologers who were at that time inseparable from kings and rulers, openly denying the universal belief that stars influenced the destiny of man.

Nor did he care for alchemists. In his times, the notion of "alchemy" effectively meant a mystical faith in chemical compounds that were transcendently identified with the stages of a person's spiritual development. Alchemists tried to achieve the transformation of one element into another, for example, copper into gold, in order to find the magical "Philosopher's Stone" etc. On the other hand, alchemy also dealt with questions of the structure of substances, their properties, and chemical reactions. Rejecting the first, mystical aspect of alchemy, Nizami still recognized the second one. Specialized chemical terminology and descriptions are often encountered in his works. The poet said of the phoney alchemists: "Who has power over chemistry, would not fall for the tricks of alchemists."

Nizami also possessed depth and breadth in his knowledge of medicine. He was well acquainted with the works of such ancient physicians as Galen (Galenus), Hippocrates (Buqrat), as well as with the achievements of Islamic medicine and pharmacology (Zakariyya al-Razi, Hunayn ibn Ishaq, Avicenna) and others. Recipes and advice given by Nizami to maintain health and treat illnesses are so shrewd and sensible, that they amaze even today's physicians.

The poet specifically studied history, including that of the ancient world and the Arab caliphate, the pre-Islamic history of Iranian nations, the history and ethnography of many Turkic tribes scattered over the vast area from China to the Mediterranean Sea. He had a thorough reading of Plato's *The Republic*, *The Laws*, and *Timaeus*; the philosophical and logical works of Aristotle; as well as the treatises of Archimedes, Euclid, Hermes, Thales of Miletus, Apollonius of Tyana, Porphyry of Tyre and others. According to the poet himself, he studied the works of al-Ṭabari, al-Baladhuri, Ya'qubi, Ibn Qutaybah, Bal'ami, Ibn Fadlan, al-Mas'udi, and other Arabic, Persian and Persian-writing historians; from these sources he acquired knowledge of different nations.

It can also be assumed that, apart from books, Nizami received information by communicating with people of various nations: Georgians, Jews and Rus'. He indubitably drew a deep understanding of the Rus' and their customs and traditions not only from books but also from conversations with Rus' merchants, who were the main suppliers of furs to the Ganja market. The Slavic proper names "Chudra", "Yerema", "Kupal", and the title "Knyaz" mentioned in *Iskandarnameh* were, of course, acquired by the poet from his close familiarity with Rus' customs and everyday life.

In his works the poet also displays a wonderful knowledge of the Holy Bible and Christian literature alike. He could have been assisted by the numerous Christian scholars of Greek and Georgian origin who lived in Ganja, famous from days of yore as a major international centre. It is also likely that the poet would have known some "Christian" languages.

As we discover from Nizami's works, he would always prepare thoroughly before starting a poem: he scrupulously studied sources on the selected topic, ordering manuscripts from remote parts of the Muslim world, and comparing them; not before he had completed an all-round acquaintance with the topic would he proceed to its poetic rendering.

Only death prevented the poet from expanding his knowledge; he looked into many an issue that occupied the minds of the progressive thinkers of the day.

It is quite difficult to outline Nizami's scientific interests. He was concerned with global matters of the universe, the structure of matter, the causes of the formation of mountains and oceans, and the innermost sources of human

actions and feelings. Nizami usually put the results of his observations into the mouths of his characters, the great philosophers and thinkers of the past, whose images he created in his works. But Nizami would retain his critical reasoning only until his inquisitive mind reached a certain limit; beyond that he had religion, the mystery of creation, something inconceivable. Unable to solve the eternal mystery of existence, he turned his eyes to the throne of the Creator.

Even more than science, it was poetry that Ilyas was fond of, even in his teens. Apart from his native Azerbaijani language, which was then called "Turki" (Turkic), he had a great command of both Arabic and Persian languages. While the former served as an everyday language of communication, since the bulk of Ganja's and, indeed, Arran's people were Turkic-speaking, Arabic

was the language of science and religion, while Persian was the language of poetry. Nizami studied and memorized verses written by both classical and contemporary Arab and Persian poets.

For there was an absolute rule in those days; everyone who wanted to try his hand at poetic pursuits had to thoroughly review all existing literature in both languages. Nizami Aruzi (Samarkandi) one of the first literary theorists and Nizami's senior contemporary, wrote: "In order to achieve high technical skill, a novice poet had to fulfil one more condition: one who has a talent for versification, with their verses becoming smooth, should turn to science and study prosody. And they should apprehend all these sciences of different kind with the assistance of a competent teacher until

they deserve the title of teacher and their name is written on the pages of time. For all the awards they receive from the exalted ruler, they

Monument to Nizami Ganjavi in Ganja. 1946. Sculptor: Fuad Abdurrahmanov. Architects: Sadig Dadashov and Mikayil Useynov.



could repay by perpetuating that ruler's name. And as befits the *Padishah*, he should take care of such poets and look after them until the latter rise to prominence in his service and make their name famous with praise."

These conditions, so clearly stated by the main literary theoretician of the 12th century, were observed strictly by all poets, including Nizami, even though no Padishah or Sultan could care less about the poet. The identity has not been accurately established to date of the well-known belles-lettres teacher who taught Nizami the subtleties of the poetic art. There is a single indication in the poet's works, namely in the poem *Iskandarnameh*

(*Iqbal-name*), in which Nizami mentions with gratitude one "Imad from Khoy" as a wise man and a teacher who once helped him in the poetic field.

Alongside the style, language and mastery of ancient and contemporary authors, and the various guides on poetics and versification, the young Ilyas, as it appears from his own accounts, would also review explanatory dictionaries in order to comprehend all of a word's connotations. He often explains the etymological meaning of many rare words, terms and proper names. Nizami tried writing poetry while still a youth. His exclusive poetic talent saw him quickly earn popularity with readers.

Khamsa Monumental Complex near Nizami Ganjavi Mausoleum in Ganja. Theme of the monument: Nushirvan and his vizier listening

Theme of the monument: Nushirvan and his vizier listening to the owls in a ruined village.







Monument to Nizami Ganjavi in Ganja. Khamsa Monumental Complex near the Nizami Ganjavi Mausoleum in Ganja.

The popularity of Nizami's delicate, lyrical *ghazals* extended not only to all of Azerbaijan, but across Central Asia and Iran, too. And the poet could have had a great career at court. At some point, he almost fell into such a position, but he quickly discarded it and, "left childish dreams and self-admiration, dreams and exhilaration behind". In his works, there are several quite clear hints about his once nearly yielding to the temptations of the gewgaws and gloss of court life.

There was certainly a stage in his life when schemes plotted by court poets intervened. Envious of Nizami's talent, they would stop at nothing to poison young Ilyas with slander and gossip. This topic recurs in many of his poems; the motives of those slanderous haters are distinctly traced in Nizami's first poem *The Treasury of Mysteries*.

It is possible that when the poet was still hopeful of a court career, some old court poets conspired against him from envy and spite. And such circumstances may have reinforced Nizami's decision to keep clear of the magnificent shahs' palaces and take his own independent road to creation.

In any event, having come to his senses in due time, Nizami realized that the mundane was momentary, the sky is "just an old widow", the world "a yellowed fruit", and nothing in the world was worth a grain of barley, as it was subject to decay; thus, one should not become attached to something perishable and transient. As the poet admitted, as a youth he tried to suppress "worldly passions" and devoted himself to asceticism, to "purification of the soul" through fasting, seclusion and abstention, because, he believed, one can "know their heart and achieve the greatness of their soul" only by subjecting the corporal essence and basic instincts to the will of reason.

Moreover, Nizami understood completely how uncertain was the lot of a court poet, subject to the whims of his lord. He returns repeatedly to this issue in his later works, advising himself and his readers to stay away from a shah's favours.

Having realized that his mission was poetry, Nizami believed that first of all he needed freedom of will and speech to achieve it. He understood perfectly that the word was created to serve a good cause. It could be used as a simple means of communication between people, as a source of evil and disaster, or the cause of joy. Word should serve the sublime arts, take shape in the human memory and serve as a means of connection with future generations, a subtle tool to establish harmony between people. Only with words were all the achievements of humanity, the fruits of their minds and talents, as well as



their delusions and mistakes, preserved and passed down from one generation to another.

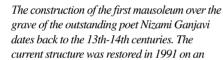
First of all, the poet turned to the genre of the *qasida* (ode). He decided to breathe real life into that genre form, by that time emasculated. Putting aside the standard forms of glorification, he began to propagate in his *qasidas* the high ideals of benevolence, offering good advice and wise counsel to kings and rulers. The poet also describes his philosophical and social views and opinions on the various issues of being.

The five *qasidas* of Nizami that have survived "can indisputably establish his authorship"; they were written in different years of his life. Alongside the *qasidas*, Nizami also wrote *ghazals*. His *ghazals* differ significantly from those of both predecessors and contemporaries. They are much more innocent, inspired and humane; reading them, we often experience a concrete plot and genuine feeling: love, anger, sadness, and delight in meeting the beloved; we experience everything that fills a lover's heart.

As a whole, Nizami's lyrics are life-asserting; he urges people to value life, its beauty and originality, as well as to cherish its wonderful gift of love, which sublimates the human soul.

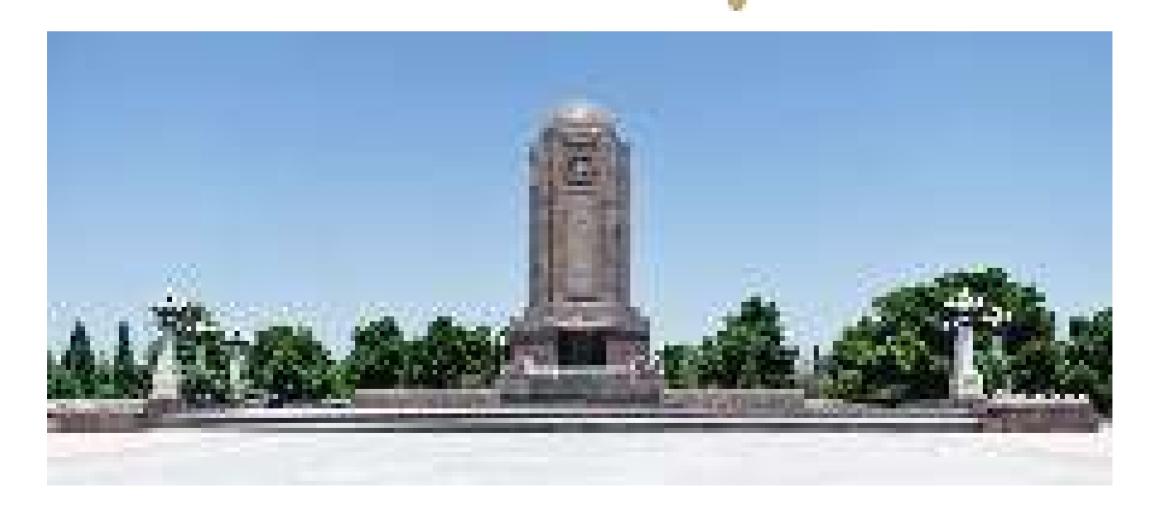
Unfortunately, Nizami's *Divan* of lyric poems has not come down to us, although he confirmed its existence in the poem *Leyli and Majnun* written in 1188. According to some medieval biographers, the *Divan* included about twenty thousand lines, but only a small part of this enormous lyrical heritage has survived.

The poet dedicated one of his didactic *qasidas* to the ruler of Derbent, at that time a part of the Shirvanshah state. Dedicated to Dara Muzaffar ad-Din (Seyf ad-Din Arslan Muzaffar ibn Muhammad, better known as Darayi Derbent), it has not survived. But, just like Nizami's other *qasidas*, it surely contained a bitter pill of good advice in appropriate poetic shape. It seems unlikely that a ruler would have liked such admonition. It so happened that at about the same time Muzaffar was presented with



existing one built in 1947.

Nizami Ganjavi Mausoleum in Ganja.



another gift, a beautiful young woman from a Kipchak tribe; her name was Appag, meaning "white", "whitey" (her name was spelled "Afak" in Arabic transliteration as there is no "p" in the Arabic language) (Y. E. Berthels. On the name of Nizami's first wife. In the book: Nizami and Fuzuli. Moscow. 1962. pp. 484-486).

It is not known for sure who gave her to the Derbent ruler; she might have been a gift from his Georgian relatives, in whose army many Kipchak soldiers served, or she may have been captured during one of the frequent military clashes with the Kipchaks, who at that time inhabited a vast territory from the mouth of the River Volga across to the Black Sea. Seduced by the young captive's beauty, Muzaffar desired to make her the crown jewel of his harem, thus to take her as a concubine. But the freedom-loving, proud and virtuous Afak who, just like her fellow tribeswomen converted to Islam, but probably with still the taste of their former freedom and independence (the poet would write about this in detail later), refused to submit to the will of the Derbent ruler. No persuasion, gift, or threat could change her mind: she 'disciplined' her new master heavily by "pulling his ears". Unable to conquer the heart of his virtuous slave, Muzaffar decided to give her away to the poet as a kind of fee for the *qasida* the latter had written for him. Perhaps he had two motives: to punish the poet and mock him for his overly persistent admonitions and lessons by setting this recalcitrant slave on him a (to have her scratch his face, too), and at the same time to humiliate Afak by handing her over to a poor poet and thus depriving her of "silk attires and delicious viands". If so, Muzaffar played a bad hand, as he inadvertently did Nizami a great favour: the overjoyed poet really fell in love with Afak, and was later to write in her memory one of his unique mesnevis that rightly entered the golden annals of world literature.

That happened in 1170: Nizami was unmarried then and, apparently, hadn't given it a thought, wanting to keep his freedom and work uninterrupted. Meeting Afak, however, for the first time in his life, the thirty-year-old poet experienced that genuine feeling of attachment and love. Nizami introduced the proud and beautiful Turkic girl to his home not as slave or handmaid, but as his lawful and respected wife.

Afak was to play a significant role in Nizami's life and work. As mentioned above, she was a Kipchak, one of the largest Turkic nations. By the 9th century CE, the Kipchaks had settled in Dashtikipchak (Kipchak field) that stretched between the mouth of the Volga the Don, the Dnieper and the Black Sea. Called Polovtsians in land of the Rus', they had a nomadic way of life and adopted Islam later than other Turkic nations. The Polovtsian women enjoyed great freedom, and were active in public life alongside the men, even fighting side

Khamsa Monumental Compound in Ganja. 5 large book-shaped monuments recalling Nizami's poems line the highway between Ganja's fortress gates and the Nizami Ganjavi











by side. Noting the beauty and grace of Kipchak women, the Arab travellers Ibn Fadlan (921 CE) and Ibn Battuta (1330s), particularly emphasized their freedom-loving nature, self-esteem and virtue. According to Ibn Battuta and other historians, even a couple of centuries after their conversion to Islam, the Kipchak women, like most of their Turkic counterparts, would be unveiled, with faces open, much to the embarrassment of faithful Muslim travellers.

Describing Afak, noting her beauty that "gave light to the eyes", as well as her elegance, agility, helpfulness and devotion, the poet repeatedly stressed her virtue, purity and independence. Afak was uneducated, she did not know Persian or Arabic, was not keen on literature but, as the poet recalled, she possessed an extraordinary natural wisdom and internal culture; she knew by heart the legends and songs, customs and habits, and heroic legends of her own people. Afak's stories about the traditions of her fellow tribespeople were later reflected in Nizami's poems, especially in his *Iskandarnameh*.

Afak was a significant factor in Nizami's destiny, helping him to gain a foothold as a poet, and contributing to his concept of sublime love and teaching of a harmonious relationship between woman and man.

The poet was the happiest of men in 1174 when his son, Muhammad, was born. Those years of love and

family happiness, were the best time in his life. He found himself in his work, achieved perfection as a writer; his social ideals, artistic principles, ethical and aesthetic views finally took shape. He was writing beautiful *ghazals* as well as didactic *qasidas*, in which he promoted nobly humane ideas of serving people, but he also decided to develop in a large corporate body of work his teaching of the meaning of life and individual purpose.

So, in about the first half of 1177, Nizami began writing his first poem *Mahzan al-Asrar* (*The Treasury of Mysteries*), in which for the first time he presented in didactic manner, with extensive artistic and illustrative material, his teaching of humane ideas ("Mardomi adamiyya"). So far, there is no agreed opinion on when *The Treasury of Mysteries* was written. According to Yevgeny Berthels, the poem was written in several days and completed in either 1173 or 1179–1180 CE (Y. E. Berthels. Nizami and Fuzuli. p. 126). Vahid Dastgerdi maintained that *The Treasury of Mysteries* was written between 1174–1175 and 1176–1177 (V. Dastgirdi. The Treasures of Ganja. Tehran. 1939).

A couplet addressing the Prophet Muhammad at the beginning of the work helps to establish the exact date of its writing:

For five hundred and fifty-nine years you've slept, it's been long enough.











The sun has risen, wake up and hurry to the assembly! Prophet Muhammad died in AH 11, which corresponds to the year 632 CE.

*Editor's note: Nizami means that as he writes, 559 years have passed since the Prophet died (in AH 11); thus, he was writing in AH 570/1174-1175 CE.

As indicated at the end of The Treasury of Mysteries, the work was completed in 1176-1177. At first glance, it follows that the poet worked on it for four or five years. However, at the end of The Treasury of Mysteries, Nizami clearly states that it took him "a few mornings" to write the poem.

* Editor's note: This expression, however, attracts attention as a figure of speech (hyperbole). The poet wants to say he spent several mornings to structure the main storylines within this plot.

The poet's invocation to the prophet: "rise from the grave", "you've slept for 559 years", confirms the idea that the unusually few instances of praise for the Prophet (there are six together with those in the chapter about the Ascension!) is explained by most of those glorifications having been written earlier as independent works. The fourth glorification, whose couplet is examined here, differs in its youthful spirit and loudly criticizes the true essence of the clerics in the poet's times. Apparently, this glorification was written in 1174 and included in the book in 1177.

Notably, Dastgerdi's publication and many manuscripts of The Treasury of Mysteries state "570" instead of "559", while some lithographs provide "552", "580", etc., which does not correspond with the facts (Nizami Ganjavi. The Treasury of Mysteries. Philological translation. p. 283).

It may be deduced that the poet started writing the poem in AH 570 (1174-1175 CE), and completed it, as he indicates precisely at the end of the composition, in 572 AH (1176-1177 CE). As we shall see below, by 1178 the book had already reached its addressee, which confirms that it was completed earlier.

Working on his first opus, Nizami apparently weighed every word and carefully refined each line.

This unmatched masterpiece of Nizami's poetic art is dedicated to Bahram Shah, the ruler (1166-1225) of Erzincan, a small principality in Asia Minor (now Turkey), although it is still not clear why, as Bahram Shah played no significant role in the political life of Azerbaijan or its neighbouring countries. This dedication may appear even stranger if we recall that at that time the star of the Atabeys of Azerbaijan was shining brightly in the political firmament, and Nizami had great respect for them. Thus, two hypotheses may be proposed.

Firstly, Nizami would never dedicate his works to any shah or sultan unless specifically requested; even if requested he would do so only if the applicant deserved to some extent a positive judgment and matched his ideal of a fair ruler.

Secondly, judging by some hints in The Treasury of Mysteries, Nizami knew Bahram Shah personally. The poet says that it was his own wish to take the poem to the dedicatee and resume their old friendly relations. He could not do this, however, for Ganja "is surrounded from all sides by a ring of swords and sword bearing lions" (Nizami Ganjavi. The Treasury of Mysteries. Philological translation. pp. 42-43).

These lines were written in 1177, when the internecine war was raging between the offspring of the Seljuk dynasty and the Atabeys. Only in July 1177 did the military actions end and the seven-year-old Toghrul III was proclaimed Sultan of Iraq and Muhammad Jahan Pahlavan his Atabey. At the same time, it should be noted that Nizami exaggerates the situation, justifying in poetic form his unwillingness to go to Bahram Shah and hand over the poem in person. Interestingly, Nizami uses just the same device when dispatching his poem The Seven Beauties to the dedicatee.

The poet may have met Bahram Shah in 1163, when Shamsad-Din the Atabey assembled all the Seljuks in Ganja, including Bahram Shah and the Derbent ruler Dara Muzaffar ad-Din, to jointly repel the raids of neighbouring Christian feudal leaders (Z.M. Buniatov. The State of Atabegs of Azerbaijan. pp. 63, 67 and onwards).





Due to his descent and the sufficiently high rank of his uncle Omar, Nizami might well have been received at the Atabey court in Ganja. As noted above, at one time he had dreamed of becoming a court poet. In all likelihood, it was in Ganja that he met Bahram Shah and Seyf ad-Din Arslan Muzaffar ibn Muhammad, the Derbent ruler. Another reason for the poet's choice may have been that Bahram Shah was apparently known as a great connoisseur of poetry and a patron of poets, writers and scholars. Many of the poet's contemporaries presented their works and dedicated magnificent *qasidas* to him. Judging by a report from Ibn Bibi, court historian of the Asia Minor Seljuks of the time, Bahram Shah received the poem from the young Nizami quite warmly. Ibn Bibi wrote: "In this year (1174-1178 CE) Khwaja Nizami Ganjavi wrote, like (a necklace of large) pearls, the book Mahzan al-Asrar, dedicated to the Most August, and sent it to His Majesty as a gift. The King sent him a reward with one of the *naibs* and *hajibs* worthy of talking with him, five thousand dinars in gold, five saddled horses with harnesses, five ambling mules, and expensive clothes embroidered with gems. He liked the book very much and said: "Were it possible, I would give the entire treasury and fortunes as a reward and gift for this book, which is composed in verses like pearls, for it will keep my name in the world forever. To praise or reprimand writers and poets is the only way to preserve a good name or shame in this fragile world and in these treacherous times" (M. Th. Houtsma. Histoire des Seldjoucides d'Asie mineure, d'après l'abrégé du "Seldjouknameh" d'Ibn-Bibi. Edition: Leude. E. J. Brill. 1902. p.57). The poet, however, would not receive these gifts, as he was later to complain more than once about hardship and his dire straits.

The poem consists of twenty conversations. Although without any clear logical sequence, they are primarily devoted to two issues: the individual and society. In conversations and thoughts about the individual, the poet analyzes the essence of human nature, the psychology of the individual and expresses his thoughts about

reshaping the existing order in conversations about society.

The poem's main purpose is to show that there can be real happiness and concord in the world only when absolute harmony is established between the individual and their society, and when the aspirations, desires and cravings of the individual and their society coincide and they strive towards a common goal.

The poet's teaching about human nature, soul and body, and the biological instincts and passions that drive them, was the foundation on which he created a social and philosophical concept of the ideal. This elegant, albeit from a modern standpoint naive, history of a harmonious society of the future anticipated by many centuries the ideas of outstanding Utopian socialists such as Thomas More, Tommaso Campanella and others.

Nizami came to the conclusion that the source of disorder, misfortune and disasters on Earth were the imperfections in society and the social order that suppressed the natural needs, desires, emotions and cravings of the vast majority of people, to endlessly satisfy the insatiable instincts of a tiny minority.

Nizami insistently advised kings and rulers that worldly goods, power, wealth, golden palaces, or imaginary greatness were incapable of helping one understand the notion of eternity, that is, of true happiness, for death renders void all those attributes of power and wealth. The only thing that can make one a small part of divine substance and thus imperishable is "mardomi", "adamiyya", that is, humaneness, humanity and philanthropy.

With his didactic stories from the lives of unjust tyrants or, on the contrary, of wise and just kings, Nizami teaches that, first of all, one should provide shoes and clothing, feed people and create normal conditions for their labour instead of endless verbiage.

Throughout the book, the poet matches tyrannical rulers with ordinary people, farmers, urban artisans, architects, scholars, skilled craftsmen, all those who create material goods and earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, and take pride in their labour.



The poet therefore believes constructive and creative work is the most effective means of taming bodily instincts and fulfilling the highest mission of serving the people.

It must be said that the relationship between people and environment was of interest to Muslim philosophers as far back as the 8th and 9th centuries CE. However, this problem was first formulated and given an artistic solution in the works of Nizami. In his *The Treasury of Mysteries*, he allocated a whole section to the issue. The poet taught that nature was a single, indivisible organism. Each member of the organism has its own function assigned to it by the creator. The disruption of any link in the chain damaged the whole natural organism and would have a pernicious effect on the fate of humanity.

The conceptual wealth of *The Treasury of Mysteries* is inexhaustible; Nizami's mastery and enormous talent are fully manifest in this poem. *The Treasury of Mysteries* brought him immediate fame and glory; his star rose high, making the works of other poets pale in comparison.

This was, indeed, the happiest time of the poet's life; a time when he was on the rise, his talent maturing, when he basked in the warmth of happiness and family well-being. But that happiness was not to last long; in 1180, Afak passed away, leaving her young son Muhammad as a living memory of herself. Nizami was heart-broken; describing the death of his beloved female character in the poem *Khosrow and Shirin*, the poet recollects his Afak with such pain that it is still not possible to read these lines without emotion.

The poet would not regain peace of mind until long after Afak's death. He would never forget her; the pain, although numbed over the years, would remain with him for the rest of his life.

Having lost Afak, the poet gave all his love to his son Muhammad, bringing him up very seriously. In most of his poems, Nizami allocates a special section called "Admonition to my son Muhammad", in which he calls him "the light of my eyes", "dearest son, born from my dear Turkic woman", etc. These lessons and teachings are important to an understanding of the poet's pedagogical views. The moral standards Nizami wished to instil in his son and the younger generation as a whole are still surprisingly noble and socially significant.

The keynote idea of Nizami's pedagogical views is a thesis that maintains that socially useful activity should be the measure of merit and personal happiness for a thinking man. The true meaning of life is about good deeds and accomplishments, and serving the people.

Socially useful activity shall be the meaning of human existence. The desire for glitter and gewgaws is unbecoming of a person bestowed with reason.

According to Nizami, the important condition for becoming a true human and doing good to people was study, and he persistently urged his son to be consistent in mastering knowledge. Nizami mentions the importance of sciences more than once in his counsels to him.

As can be seen from his father's poems, Muhammad in his youth was fond of poetry and apparently wanted to follow in his father's pen strokes. The poet, however, noticed that Muhammad did not possess a genuine, "God-given" talent, and advised him to renounce ambitious thoughts and engage instead in a "more useful trade", thereby benefiting people in a more specific and everyday way.

We have no reliable information about Muhammad's further fate. But, as it appears from the tone of Nizami's lessons and counsels written in 1197, he was not very happy about Muhammad's way of life. The only thing known for sure is that back in 1188, the poet had sent a special poetic appeal, together with the poem *Leyli and Majnun*, to Shirvanshah Akhsitan I, requesting that he have the prince take Muhammad under his wing "to prevent him from needing anyone's help, so that his head will not look forward and his eyes backwards."



writing the dedications in two poems (*Iqbalnameh* and *The Seven Beauties*), he apparently presented them to other rulers after his father's death, which resulted in different names appearing in different copies of those works.

Muhammad had a large family; one of his sons (or grandsons) Maid ad-Din Nizami later became an "ex-

There is some reason to believe that after the death

of his father, Muhammad tried to "revise" some of his

poems, re-dedicating them to one or another ruler. Re-

Muhammad had a large family; one of his sons (or grandsons) Majd ad-Din Nizami later became an "expert" in and keeper of his grandfather's (or great-grandfather's) works (he knew them all by heart). The famous bibliographer and book-lover Ibn al- Fuvati met him in 1305 (Z. M. Buniatov. Prominent figures of Azerbaijan in the works of Ibn al-Fouvati, - DAS Azerb. SSR. A series of history, philosophy and law. 1979. No. 2., p. 63).

It took Nizami a long time to recover from Afak's death. He still lived with his son but would not marry again for almost 7 years. Whenever he had time free of worldly affairs, he spent it home, in industrious pursuits among books. We do not know for sure what those "worldly affairs" were that distracted the poet (he often complained about them); according to Saeed Nafisi, he was engaged in agriculture. Berthels believed that he was teaching. The poet displays a good knowledge of agriculture in his works. Perhaps it was for that reason that Atabey Qizil Arslan presented him with the village of Hamduniyan; we will discuss this event later, but Nafisi's suggestion seems most plausible.

The plot of *Khosrow and Shirin* had occurred to Nizami as much by a conjuncture in the whole course of the development of society's aesthetic and artistic needs as by events in the life of the poet himself. All these factors had a decisive role in the creation of the greatest lyrical epic poem of the Middle Ages, which is rather more a poem-novel than an ordinary poem in its volume and genre.

Following Afak's death, his long and painful meditations resulted in Nizami approaching the idea of per-

petuating her image in his poems. He was pondering how to implement the idea.

Atabey Jahan Pahlavan personally requested the poet to write a love poem in his honour, promising to reward him generously. This request suited Nizami well, for it coincided with his own creative plan. The choice of subject for the poetic narrative was entirely up to Nizami, and he was very happy about that; he was free to choose and interpret the plot as he saw fit.

Another factor prompting the poet to take on a completely new and unfamiliar genre were new aesthetic demands. The predominance of the didactic genre and large-scale epics was now in the past. Readers were interested not in legends about shahs or kings, but rather in the experiences and feelings of heroes, their passions and inner world.

Nizami's first poem, The Treasury of Mysteries, as noted above, was warmly received by Bahram Shah and highly appreciated by connoisseurs, thus making the poet extremely popular. However, as a great psychologist capable of sensing the new tendencies and spirit of the time, he realized that the didactic form of presentation he had used in The Treasury of Mysteries to propagate his social, political, ethical and aesthetic views, as well as for the artistic embodiment of his teaching of a harmonious society and humanity, did not quite match the tastes of the century or the aesthetic ideals of his readers. Nizami realized that, no matter how perfect their wording, his epigrams, exhortations, appeals and counsels would not be strong enough to deliver his message to readers had he continued attempting to influence only their minds and not their feelings.

In other words, love stories enjoyed the greatest popularity among the readers of his time, so the poet decided to keep up and create a brand-new type of poem. He set the goal to make the protagonist of his new work an outstanding personality, to reveal the hero's inner world, his struggle with himself, the development of his character, and to show the clash of the mind with im-

Statute of Nizami Ganjavi in the Khamsa Monumental Complex in Gania.



pulses of the soul through poetic expression. According to Nizami himself, he decided "to show the passion with such vehemence that all passionate people become attached to the poems."

Planning to immortalize the memory of his beautiful Afak and at the same time fulfil Atabey's request, Nizami began writing the poem *Khosrow and Shirin* in the summer of 1180.

Wishing to make a woman the main protagonist of his poem, Nizami chose the story of Shirin and Khosrow, widely known in the Middle East, as the subject of the narrative. The plot of this legend suited absolutely Nizami's new creative mindset, while enabling him to create the image of an ideal woman and glorify sublime and all-conquering love.

In the process, Nizami faced two obstacles: first, one of protagonists was a woman; second, his main characters, protagonists among them, were pre-Muslim fire worshippers rather than Muslims. The poet therefore had to "create a garden of Eden from hellfire". Creating images of fire worshippers was viewed as disrespectful by the Muslim society of the time. Nizami therefore wrote a special chapter "A justification for the writing of the book" to protect himself from accusations of "heresy."

It was not long before the poet's fears were realised, as a shower of accusations rained down on him as soon as he began writing the poem. Hearing about the topic chosen and the heroes of the new poem, one of Nizami's friends rushed to accuse him of "playing fast, being light of piety, but still breaking fast with carrion bone," "gilding bronze", and "building a Ka'ba for idols." Those attacks eventually affected both the composition and plot of the poem. Apparently, Nizami subsequently wrote special chapters, *Khosrow sees the Prophet Muhammad in a Dream, The Prophet Writes a Letter to Khosrow, The Ascension of the Prophet, The Condemnation of the Envious* etc. These chapters, inconsistent with the logical development of the plot, were deliberately attached to

the end of the poem and therefore appear as unnecessary annexes to a completed building. But even these special chapters, written to preclude possible accusations, could not save the poet from attack.

Among other things, Nizami had to safeguard himself from rumours that he had made a woman the main protagonist of his work. He was also well aware that Atabey Shams ad-Din Ildeniz's chief assistant and adviser was his beloved wife Momine Khatun, the mother of Toghrul III, Muhammad Jahan Pahlavan and Qizil Arslan.

It may well be that before starting the poem, Nizami met with Muhammad Jahan Pahlavan, told him his plan and secured his support.

Before retiring to solitude, Nizami certainly used to visit the court, perhaps with his uncle Khwaja Omar or without him, and talk with Muhammad Jahan Pahlavan. But he also knew perfectly well that "one must avoid meeting shahs, like dry hemp must beware of hot fire". Attracted by candlelight, the moth burns as soon as it touches the flame. As we have seen, throughout his life Nizami consciously kept his distance from the Atabeys' court and suite, which might even have aroused Jahan Pahlavan's displeasure. It is typical that in the section glorifying the Atabey at the beginning of the poem, the poet apologizes for not accompanying him.

Perhaps Jahan Pahlavan was displeased with Nizami for not having being presented with his first poem *The Treasury of Mysteries*, which had brought great popularity to both author and its dedicatee Bahram Shah, the little-known ruler of Erzincan; it appeared that Nizami had snubbed the powerful Atabey. "I need to explain much to you", Nizami writes, "but I will say in just a few words ... Your humble servant, Nizami, tarried for a long time, but please do not feel angry."

The poet had finally found a gift worthy of the Atabey, this poem. But he still informs Atabey Jahan Pahlavan - between the lines, of course - that the work







brings him insufficient credit or favour. So, in an address to Sultan Toghrul III, complaining about the hardships of his life, the poet pleads with him to speak on his behalf to the Atabey and tell him: "O Conqueror of the World, where would Nizami get hundreds of boons? Is it not the time to show him some kindness, put his affairs in order, for he is now at a loose end?! This warbler has worked all his life, blessing our weal; without drinking a cup of wine from our cellars, he showers us with gratitude and blessings, I am petitioning for him: please send him gifts, at least once."

*Editor's note: This appeal shows that Nizami had not previously received any gifts from Atabey.

It seems that the poet's complaints were heeded, and he was promised a reward for his works.

Nizami worked on the poem passionately, wholeheartedly. He began writing early in 1180 and completed it late in 1181. As the poet noted, he had written "a good book, and should copyists distort it, it will be a great sin against me."

From the numerous hints in the poem, it becomes evident that both during and after his work on it the poet endured significant adversity, but nothing could make him abandon his credo for life and poetry, and give up his heart, the poetic word, "in exchange for a piece of bread." He lived a humble life, apart from the noise and luxury of court, "spending nights to burn, inflame my heart and strike fire from the flint of words" in his solitude.

He sent his poem to Jahan Pahlavan late in 1181. But it reached the Atabey only in 1182, as he was on a military campaign. The poem was well received, but the generous promises, as we will see later, were not fulfilled. The poet was not unused to such treatment.

Having dispatched the poem, it seems that Nizami, continued working on it; he edited, repeatedly re-wrote, carefully trimmed, amended and revised individual sections. The second, final edition was completed in about

1192, after the completion of his third poem, Leyli and Majnun. The second edition of Khosrow and Shirin included whole new sections: Khosrow sees the Prophet in his dream, The message of the Prophet to Khosrow, The Ascension of the Prophet, Instruction and Completion of the Book, Toghrul Shah demands to see the scholar Nizami, Condolences on the passing of Jahan Pahlavan.

The most interesting of these sections is the penultimate one, in which the poet writes of his visit to Qizil Arslan's headquarters. This event was preceded by a number of important events occurring in the Transcaucasian political arena. Jahan Pahlavan died in 1186, and Qizil Arslan became the Atabey (literally *father custodian*) under Sultan Toghrul III.

During the official arrival of the new Atabey at the capital, ritual demanded that all eminent citizens go to meet his suite. By that time, Nizami had already been recognized as "the best of poets". Rumours of his holiness and wisdom had spread with his glory. A modest, secluded life far from worldly bustle, scientific pursuits, selfless creation, abstinence and asceticism led people to regard him as a saint.

Respecting Nizami's hugely popular poems and his authority with the people, Qizil Arslan dispatched a special runner to the poet with an invitation to meet him.

The Atabey received the poet kindly and with great respect. It is not clear, however, whether Sultan Toghrul III attended that reception.

When Nizami arrived, the Atabey was having a good time; a feast was in full swing: dressed in silk, narrow-eyed Turkic women singers were playing the *chang* and the *rud* and reciting Nizami's *ghazals*. Cup by cup, the wine-scoopers served wine to the shah, and "he was drinking, but it was his enemies who got drunk". When the poet was heralded in, the Atabey, out of respect "for the poet's forbearance, not for his turban", ordered the musicians and singers to stop, had servants remove the wine from the table and, putting his hand on Nizami's



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shoulder, seated the poet next to himself. Nizami called his reciter (*ravi*), who read the *qasida* composed in honour of Qizil Arslan. Then they talked for a long time, and the poet gave "good advice and counsel befitting kings". At the end of the conversation, the Atabey praised the *Khosrow and Shirin* poem, saying:

Both my brother and I,
Had a duty to provide you with food,
like mother's milk.
My brother, who was the king of the
kings of the world,
Was a king and a mighty man.
What did he give you as a reward of
gems and treasures?
For the book you worked on for years?
I heard that his lot was to save you (from poverty).
He handed over two villages to you from his domain.
Say, did they or did they not give you those villages?
Did they or did they not send you the khan's
letter for the villages?
(Khosrow and Shirin. Word-for-word translation)

From these questions, Nizami gathered that the late Jahan Pahlavan had given him two villages instead of the promised Chinese silks, male and female slaves and horses in luxurious harnesses, but officials had failed to act at the behest of their sovereign. The poet diplomatically responded that it was the death of the Atabey that must have prevented them from acting at his behest, and Nizami hoped his reigning brother, that is, Qizil Arslan, would make it up to him.

Qizil Arslan ordered that Nizami be granted Hamduniyan, one of the most poverty-stricken villages. As it turned out later, Hamduniyan was a "miserable ruin, narrow as a stove, half a *farsang* (unit of linear measure) long and half a *farsang* wide", located far away, on the border with Georgia; it yielded no income, on the contrary, it required considerable investment, on which "Abkhazians are sharecroppers (and pay half of their produce as rent to the owner)". Nizami said later that his enviers were having a good chuckle over that "royal gift". The poet took this blow stoically, remembering that the main thing was the realization of a duty ful-filled and the masterpiece he had created, and not some shah's reward.

Moved by evidently down-to-earth considerations, the poet married again in 1187. That marriage, however, was unlucky and a year later his wife, whose name is never mentioned by the poet, passed away; he married once more, but his third wife did not last long and died in 1199; the poet retained no special memories of her either.

The only passing reference to these wives can be found in the poem *Iskandarnameh* (*Iqbalnameh*), in which the poet recollects Afak and other losses sent to him by fate.

Nizami belonged to the category of artists whose actions matched his words. He always practised what he preached and followed the norms of morality that he strove to instil in his readers. "Reputable" men, as a rule, could have four wives at the same time. Not only did Nizami disapprove of the custom, he openly opposed the polygamy legalized by the Muslim religion and morality.

His poem *Khosrow and Shirin* caused a real sensation. Its fame contributed to the glory of the Atabeys, causing a stir among many rival rulers. For this very reason in 1188, Shirvanshah Akhsitan I (1160–1197), in constant feud and opposition to Jahan Pahlavan and Qizil Arslan, sent a special messenger to Ganja, requesting the poet to write a new poem in his honour. The Shirvanshah, wishing to go down in history and have his name immortalized in the brilliant poet's work, wrote:

I want you, in memory of Majnun's love,
To create a story like a rare pearl...
This story shall be the shah (king) of all novels,
And you must spend on it a treasury of words.
Adorn this virgin bride,
With the decorations of Persians and Arabs.
You know, I'm such a connoisseur of words,

I can tell new couplets from old.



If you pay for it with solid gold [words],

You will do miracles,

But if you use billon,

Then you'd better not start at all.

Look out of the box of thoughts,

At the necklace you string with pearls!

Our devotion is not to Turkism,

[And therefore] Turkic-like words do not befit us.

Those of high birth

Need high-style words.

(Nizami Ganjavi. Leyli and Majnun.

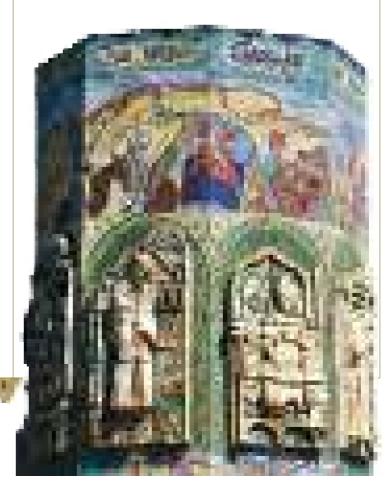
Philological translation.pp.53-54)

Here we should pay attention to the expression "Our devotion is not to Turkism, [and therefore] Turkic-like words do not befit us".

In their time, Nizami's biographers have had heated discussions about these lines. Some modern researchers maintain, based on the cited couplet and expression "Adorn this virgin bride, with decorations of Persians and Arabs", that Nizami intended to write the poem in the Turkic language and, had Akhsitan I not dissented, he would have done so. But then the question is: who forbade Nizami to write the other poems in the Turkic language? Other researchers (Dastgerdi and Berthels) rightly point out that the poet may be hinting here (and he does it several times, as we saw above in Khosrow and Shirin, as well as other poems) at the famous legend of the "barbaric Turk" Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni and the poet Ferdowsi who did not receive the award promised to him by the Sultan for his epic Shahnameh. However, there are more strings attached to the Shirvanshah's words. He is clearly sniping at his sworn enemies, the "rough and barbaric Turks", the Atabeys Muhammad Jahan Pahlavan and Qizil Arslan. As we noted above, Nizami had also been promised great fortunes by Muhammad Jahan Pahlavan for Khosrow and Shirin, but he had received nothing, apparently the fault of the Atabey's officials. Akhsitan was well aware that Khosrow and Shirin:







Mosaics and other elements from the Khamsa Monumental Complex in Ganja.





Was accepted with great cordial joy,

That it was impossible to believe in it. So many unfolded bales of Chinese silk,

So much musk that gathered no dust from the air.

(Khosrow and Shirin. Word for word trans.)

But the Shirvanshah also knew that the promised reward had been delayed. The Shirvanshahs were from the ancient Iranian Sassanid dynasty, priding themselves on their exalted origins. If we interpret his words in that light, the implications were approximately the following: "We are highborn kings and we fulfil our promises, we are true to our word, and we will never do as the "low-born Turks" do: that is, what Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni did to Ferdowsi and what the Atabeys Jahan Pahlavan and Qizil Arslan did to you. So, we request of you to please use in the poem lofty words befitting our highborn family rather than "rough", 'barbaric", "Turkic-like" words."

The poet himself had a mind broad in scope; he was well acquainted with the literature, science and philosophy of various nations, thus being one of the advanced and progressive-minded people of his time. Nizami treated with deep respect the cultures created by the Oriental (Arab, Iranian, Chinese) and European (Greek and Roman) nations. He was an internationalist, unfamiliar with the preaching of national exclusivity. He understood perfectly well that the human race, the sons of Adam, had been created from the same matter, that all people have the same feelings of love and joy, suffering and grief, that they are all equal before God.

But Nizami still loved his nation, honoured them deeply, and showed convincingly in his works and in every line thereof that his people are capable of any



achievement in any field, whether cultural, intellectual or spiritual.

It was not only out of human loyalty that he respected and loved his people, but mainly due to his spiritual and cultural contribution to the whole civilization. In his works, the poet uses the word "Turk" many times, communicating very different, but always truly positive, tones and meanings (Azerbaijanis, like the other Turkic-speaking nations, were called Turks in those days).

The word Turk (Azerbaijani) has the following meanings in Nizami's poetic lexicon: noble, just, kind, humane; Turkic woman: white-skinned, beautiful, virtuous, graceful, slender, freedom-loving etc.

As we may conclude from Nizami's account of events, forced by circumstances and persuaded by his beloved son, he held a grudge and spent four months writing the poem *Leyli and Majnun*, a beautiful hymn to high love, a poem that is rightly considered one of the purest pearls in the immortal *Khamsa*.

*Editor's note: On this account, he wrote the following: (Nizami Ganjavi. Leyli va Majnun. Tashih va sharh: Behruz Sarvatiyan. Tehran: Moesseseye-entesharate-Amir Kabir. 1394. p.45)

> لیکن چه کنم هوا دو رنگ است کاندیشه فراخ و سینه تنگ است

دهلیز فسانه چو ن بود تنگ گردد سخن از شد آمدن لنگ

> میدان سخن فراخ باید تا طبع سواریی نماید

But what can you do if the weather is changing?
The mind is broad but the chest is narrow?
If the passage of legend is tight?
The flow of words will surely stumble.
The space for words should be wide,
For the poet to let his horse run freely.
(This fairy-tale does not match the world of my dreams)





Sculpted elements on a wall from the Khamsa Monumental Complex in Ganja.



OFFICE AND IN

As noted in the introduction to the poem, Nizami was at first somewhat sceptical about the topic of the request. He believed that the legend of Leyli and Majnun was a complete artistic concept, and therefore "it makes no sense to add more to the opus".

The love of Leyli and Majnun seemed too restricted and low-scale for a poet who had created the multidimensional poem-novel, *Khosrow and Shirin*. Besides, for him the plot seemed too gloomy and tragic.

However, a reading of written sources and oral legends, gave him a genuine interest in the lore. It appears that Nizami drew his principal material from written sources that were, in the 12th century, only available in Arabic, rather than from folklore versions of the story. The legend of Leyli and Majnun appeared in the late 7th or early 8th century among northern Arab tribes (Bedouins). The written narrative, however, only dates back to the early 10th century.

The main written sources available to Nizami were *The Book of Poetry and Poets* (Kitab al-Sh'irwa-al-Shu'ara) by Ibn Qutayba (d. 889), *The Book of Songs* (Kitab al-Aghani) by Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani (d. 967), and *The Chronicles of Majnun and Leyli* by Abu Bakr al-Walibi (11th century); the latter is still quite popular in the Orient. The plot of the early story of Leyli and Majnun is almost identical in the above sources and Nizami was faithful to it in writing his own version.

Unlike Khosrow and Shirin, the characters of Nizami's new poem are equally devoted to, and are quite worthy, of each other. However, their situations of dependency distinguish them from their counterparts. Both are under their parents' guardianship; Leyli is the one most constrained in her actions. Majnun's father is a nobleman, a Sheikh, head of the tribe, while Leyli's leads another tribe; both fathers are slaves to tradition, religious morality and the superficial norms of behaviour they are obliged to comply with. Regardless of their differences, they are at heart quite similar: both stick blindly to dogma, once established. Both are kind and fair, in

their own fashion; they wish happiness for their children, but understand such happiness in their own way. When it emerges that Majnun has fallen into an "unusual", sublime and passionate love with Leyli, they believe he has "disgraced" himself and gone mad; so, they try at all costs to save their beloved children from such misfortune and "shame".

Nizami delineates with remarkable skill this sublime but tragic feeling and the conflict between the light and natural movements of a human soul and the closed minds of tradition; the merciless laws of gloomy medieval reality.

As always, Nizami urged in his poem the promotion of high moral standards. He wrote short didactic sections at the beginning of the poem with characteristic titles: Refusal to serve kings; On the point that one shall not take away people's daily bread; On the point that one shall not tolerate oppression; On the pleasure of satisfaction with a little; On the joy of serving the people; On the obliteration of vanity etc.

Nizami wrote two more poems after Leyli and Majnun; the first of them, The Seven Beauties, was completed in 1197. As to the history of this poem, we should note that many issues concerning its writing, title and dedicatee are still unclear. It was most likely dedicated to Suleyman Shah, the Seljuk Sultan of Asia Minor and brother-in-law of Bahram Shah of Erzincan, a good acquaintance and dedicatee of Nizami's first poem, The Treasury of Mysteries. Suleyman Shah was fond of poetry, he even wrote poems in Persian (some of them have survived) and patronized poets, writers and scholars. Among the factors moving him to request a new poem in his honour from Nizami were very likely the fame attending his brother-in-law thanks to The Treasury of Mysteries; the high popularity of Nizami's other poems, Khosrow and Shirin and Leyli and Majnun, and his own keen interest in poetry. Nizami's first dedicatee, Bahram Shah, and rulers of other provinces were subjects of Suleyman Shah. Writing began at Suleyman's request in 1196, when he became supreme ruler of Asia Minor and rose to the throne in Konya.



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Nizami completed the original version of the poem dedicated to Suleyman Shah on 31 July 1197. The sections with dedications at the beginning and the end of the book were subsequently revised, and the name of Suleyman Shah ibn Kilij Arslan was replaced by that of Maragha ruler Ala al-Din Korp Arslan (1174–1208), several couplets were added in praise of Korp Arslan's sons and family, and the poem was presented to him. This was probably done by his son Muhammad after Nizami's death in 1202, for the poem sent to Suleyman Shah prompted no response, nor was the author compensated by a customer who was constantly embattled in wars far from his capital, Konya.

*Editor's note: Opinions differ on the date of Nizami's death. 1209 is the most commonly accepted date, but later in this article Prof. Aliyev offers evidence in support of 1202 being the date.

Y. E. Berthels wrote: "This dedication has baffled European orientalists. Wilhelm Bacher analyzed the name of Korp Arslan's eldest son, and believed the poem was dedicated to Nusrat al-Din Bishkin. C. E. Wilson, who translated *The Seven Beauties* into English, devoted much effort to proving that the poem was dedicated to the Khorezm Shah Ala ad-Din Tekish (1172–1200). All this, of course, results from reviewing bad manuscripts, in which the name Korp Arslan, unknown to scribes, was partially or completely distorted or even changed to Qizil-Arslan" (Y. E. Berthels. Nizami and Fuzuli. p.148).

It should be noted, however, that many manuscripts and lithographed publications specify "Kilij Arslan" (the name of Suleyman Shah's father) rather than "Korp Arslan" or "Qizil Arslan". This is further proof of the belief that the poem was written at the request of, and dedicated to, Suleyman Shah, son of Kilij Arslan.

In its composition and artistic features, *The Seven Beauties* is noticeably different from the other Nizami's poems. The storyline is based on the life and deeds of Shah Bahram Gur, a ruler in pre-Muslim Iran.

According to legend, Bahram married seven beauties, daughters of mighty lords of the "seven climes of the Earth" (how medieval science divided the whole inhabited world). Each of the seven beauties related a fine legend to the shah before sleep. These "inserted novels" form an independent layer within the work. The colour of each dome matched that of one of the seven planets known at that time that ruled the Earth's seven climes.

Nizami used the story of Bahram's reign to express once again his views of an ideal ruler who uses his power for the good of the people. The image he portrayed, however, does not always meet the high requirements for such an ideal sovereign. Bahram possesses many positive traits; he is wise, brave, resolute and just. Ascending to authority, he begins to rule the country wisely, and it soon becomes a promised land, its people living in happiness. When stricken by drought, Bahram orders the opening of the state's stores to provide the people with everything necessary. Only one person starved during four years of drought.

But well-being and constant success spoil Bahram and impair his watchfulness; taking advantage of the now careless Shah and his inactive commanders, the Chinese Khagan (khan of khans) suddenly attacks Iran with a huge army. Bahram acts boldly and decisively at this difficult moment: he leads his small troop in a surprise attack on the Khagan's army and prevails.

The Seven Beauties is a poem with a prominent mythical element, which is predominant in the inserted novels (short stories) with an abundance of mythical and fairy-tale creatures, as well as all kinds of spirits and monsters (ghouls, ifrits [demons], divs [ogres], loripedes [an old man who clung to victims' necks by legs like leather belts until he ate them] etc.). However charming this aura of the fairy tale may be, Nizami still achieves his goal with amazing authenticity and inimitable poetic skill: he conveys to the reader his ideas of the path to self-improvement, protecting the good and combating deceit and injustice.



Here one finds the deep thought and prophetic anticipation that so enriches Nizami's heritage. Contrary to official Muslim theology and the science of the time, Nizami infers that the world and the universe as a whole are much wider, larger, and more diverse than perceived by the most daring mind.

From hints in the text, one may understand that Nizami had family problems while writing it: the cause was apparently his twenty-seven-year-old son, Muhammad. He had already settled into married life, so Nizami had to move out. He was leading a solitary life and harboured a grudge against his son.

*Editor's note: Earlier Prof. Aliyev gives the year of Muhammad's birth as 1174, and the year of completion of The Seven Beauties as 1197, i.e., when Muhammad was 23 years old.

It was not long before the end of his life that, having completed gigantic work on the four poems, Nizami decided to encapsulate his thoughts on the meaning of life and the destiny of man in a grandiose epic. In 1197, he commenced *Iskandarnameh* (*The Book of Iskandar*), the pinnacle of his creation, surpassing the works he had written so far in its narrative scale.

Despite his age, weariness and everyday adversity, the poet found the strength to complete the work of his life, creating a colossal story in two books. The first and longer book, is the *Sharafnameh* (*The Book of Honour*), and the second, the *Iqbalnameh* (*The Book of Fate*). These titles correctly reflect the poetic plot and the main concept concerning the meaning of life, which forms the basis of the epic.

He created a surprisingly interesting and dynamic image of Iskandar: not the historical Alexander of Macedon, but an ideal ruler who never existed. At the beginning of the poem, Nizami pictures a young, energetic king who strives to take the lead among fellow kings and commanders, who is willing to earn fame in battles, campaigns and conquests. But this is not the only source of his inexhaustible energy. Iskandar is a warrior and a philosopher who wanders the world in search of keys

to the mysteries of life and universe alike. He discovers and experiences the world in an eager and purposeful fashion, striving to comprehend the meaning of human happiness and achieve the ideal true life. Eventually, he finds himself in the Promised Land, a kind of Paradise on earth. There are no masters, servants, patricians, slaves, oppressed, or oppressors in this land of universal happiness. There are no hostile classes or enmity; people die only of old age, not from illness or adversity.

Iskandar then learns that, apart from establishing social justice, the inhabitants of this happy land have also managed to achieve harmony with nature.

Shocked by what he has seen and what he has heard from the elders of the "City of the Sun", Iskandar realizes the ideals of a harmoniously structured society. In light of this truth, all his military successes and "glorious deeds" now appear merely as senseless and unnecessary cruelty. He thinks about establishing similar order in his own country.

Detailing the ultimate aim of his teaching and creating the image of a harmonious society, which is described as "a valley of abundance and truth, goodness and beauty, peace and love", the poet instructed his descendants to bring this bright ideal to life.

The Iskandarnameh is the pinnacle of Nizami's creation; it is truly encyclopaedic in its material and also of course, in the rich and succinct ideas it contains. Here we discover the pathos of a great soul and the humane concepts that permeate his other works. Nizami ceaselessly revisited them: it was his sworn duty to disseminate them in every possible way, and leave them as a solid memory in the minds of his contemporaries and descendants.

Iskandarnameh was written in the last years of his life. He completed the first part, *Sharafnameh*, in 1199, and the second part, *Iqbalnameh*, in 1201.

*Editor's note: Iskandarnameh is in fact a threepart dastan: in the first part, Alexander subdues countries as a king and military commander; in the second part, he studies the sciences and pearls of wisdom ---



created by the Persians, Indians and Chinese, for one cannot attain the highest level without wisdom; in the final part, like Dhu'l-Qarneyn, ('Two Horns' - a prophet named in the Qur'an, sometimes mistakenly associated

with Iskandar) he rises to the level of prophet, roams the

world again and creates a virtuous model of society.

من از هر سه دانه که دانا فشاند درختی برومند خواهم نشاند نخستین درپادشا یی زنم دم از کار کشورگشا یی زنم ز حکمت برآرایم آنگه سخن کنم تازه با رنجهای کهن به پیغمبری کوبم آنگه درش که خواند خدا نیز پیغمبرش سه درساختم هر دری کان گنج جداگانه بر هر دری برده رنج

I will grow a big fruit tree.

I will first knock on the rulers' door

Will start talking of conquering the countries.

Then I will decorate the word with wisdom

Renew it with an old labour.

Then I will knock on the door of prophecy

And Allah will brand him prophet.

I created three doors, each a treasure of gems

And worked on each door individually.

From three seeds I have sown

(Nizami Ganjavi. Sharafnama. Tashih va sharh: Behruz Sarvatiyan. Tehran: Moesseseye-entesharate-Amir Kabir. 1393. p.96)

The date of Nizami's death has been disputed, but some data are available that can help resolve this matter once and for all. Someone from Nizami's family, most likely his son, described the poet's death and included this chapter at the end of the *Iqbalnameh*. It contains the following lines:

He was sixty and three years old,

And six months later he passed away.

(Nizami Ganjavi. Iskandarnameh. Translated by K. Lipskerov. p.43)

Converting 63.5 lunar years to the common system (the lunar year is 10 days shorter than the solar one), we can accurately calculate that the poet passed away in June 1202.

Monument to Iskandar and Nushaba. Ganja. 2012.





Nizami Ganjavi Museum in Ganja. The museum located opposite the Nizami Mausoleum was opened in 2014. There are exhibits reflecting the life and work of the poet, his manuscripts and illustrations of motifs from the Khamsa. There is a statue of the poet in front of the museum.

*Editor's note: As noted earlier, opinions differ on the date of Nizami's death. 1209 is the most commonly accepted date.

It is no coincidence that over time Nizami's poems came to be perceived as a whole entity, for they naturally form a distinctive cycle with a pronounced ideological and artistic cohesion. It was not before the poet's demise that this cycle was titled *Khamsa* (*Quinary*) or *Panj Ganj* (*Five Treasures*). The *Khamsa* of Nizami predetermined the path of literary development across many states of the Middle East for many years to come.

Nizami's humane teaching, his dreams of equality, fraternity, freedom, good, love, and a just reconstruction of society have long been an inspiration for progressive people in their struggle for high ideals. More than eight centuries have passed since Nizami was born, but his ra-

diant talent will never cease to amaze. Nizami, his creations and his characters will live on and contribute to the best accomplishments of humanity.

Note: We are honoured to provide select pieces illustrating the life and literary works of Nizami Ganjavi, from the book "A Poem About Immortal Love" by Prof. Rustam Aliyev, D.Litt, prominent Azerbaijani orientalist, Honorary Scientist of Azerbaijan and Honorary Doctor of Harvard University.

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Chapter XIII

Poetic Imitations of the *Khamsa*

edieval traditions in the poetry of the Middle East are quite pronounced; they feature a number of basic storylines and established images: Majnun, the personification of passionate love; Farhad, the personification of strength and honesty; Shirin, that of love and devotion. The formation and recognition of word pictures follows a certain pattern, and Nizami's contribution to this process was enormous. He would frequently address the storylines in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, identifying the most brilliant characters of folklore and history and using his quill to render them new meaning.

It is no coincidence that all the celebrated poets who came after Nizami would, like him, write five works, as if enchanted by his mastery. Even though they wrote from their own talent, interpreting plots in their own way, there was still imitation - the sincerest form of flattery. It was rather like the same role being played by different actors. Nizami was the pioneer in this field and the one who found and selected these plots and allusions in the chronicles and legends. Nizami it was who established a new format; there was no concept of *Khamsa* before him, but after Nizami, writing a *Khamsa* was a must.

Researchers have repeatedly noted the great fame that Nizami's *masnavis* enjoyed across the Middle East;

a shining example is the throng of imitative poems (*naziras*) written in Persian and Turkic languages. Centuries back, Nizami's *Khamsa* predetermined the future of the epic genre across the Middle East, where poets strove to create a new *Khamsa* and compete with their ingenious predecessor. The opinion prevailed that a certain storyline could only work with the particular rhythm that Nizami had picked for it. Poets have constantly worked within Nizami's tradition since the 13th century and, like it or not, they eventually became his followers.

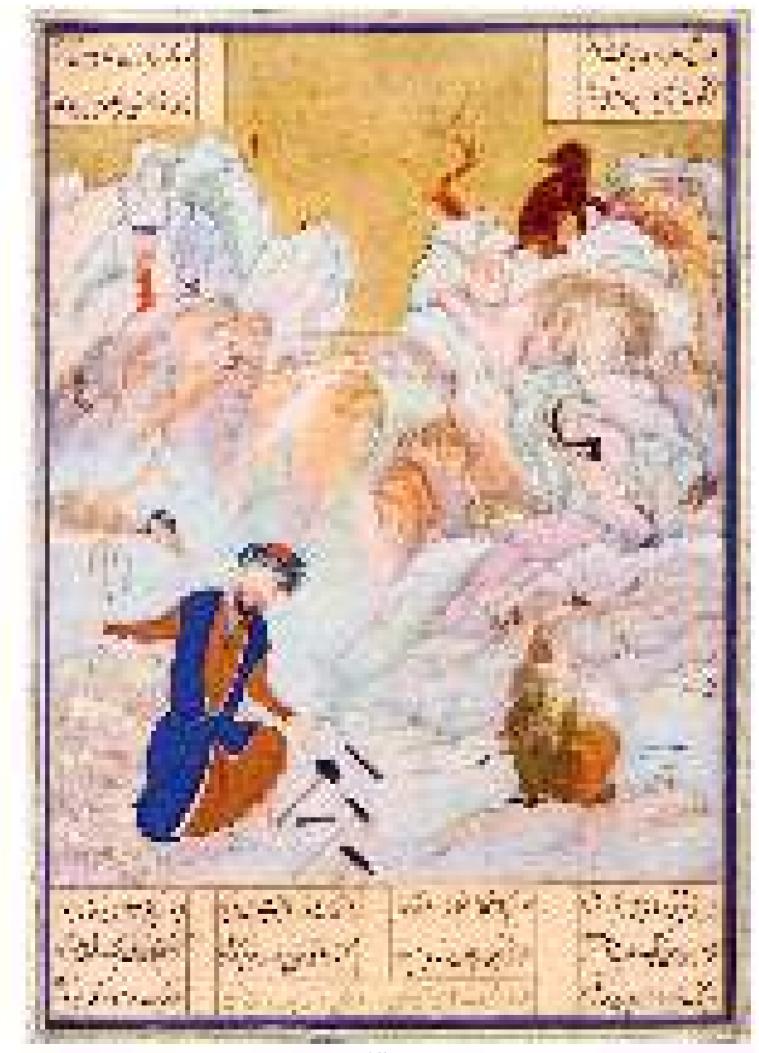
Among the notable oriental poets who wrote famous quintets based on the *Khamsa* were the Indo-Persian poet Amir Khosrow Dehlavi (1253–1325), Abd ar-Rahman Jami (1414–1492) (a native of Herat) and Alisher Navoi (1444–1501) of Uzbekistan.

These imitations persisted into the early 20th century, but none of them reached the heights of Nizami; his *Khams*a reigns supreme.

The rhythms and metres that Nizami selected for his poems, depending on their type, have remained unchanged to date: didactic, romantic and heroic, romantic and sentimental, adventure and heroic. Even now, it is unusual to go beyond this size and pattern of verse.







MS. Elliot 408. Alisher Navoi. Bodleian Library. Oxford University. Date: 1485.

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f. 66a. Farhad hears false news of Shirin's death.

MS. Elliot 318. Alisher Navoi. Bodleian Library. Oxford University. Date: 1553. Place: Bukhara.

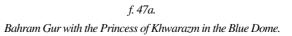
of poems included in Nizami's Khamsa. A brief de-

in Nizami's Seven Beauties became a necessity

It is not our intention to list all the imitations

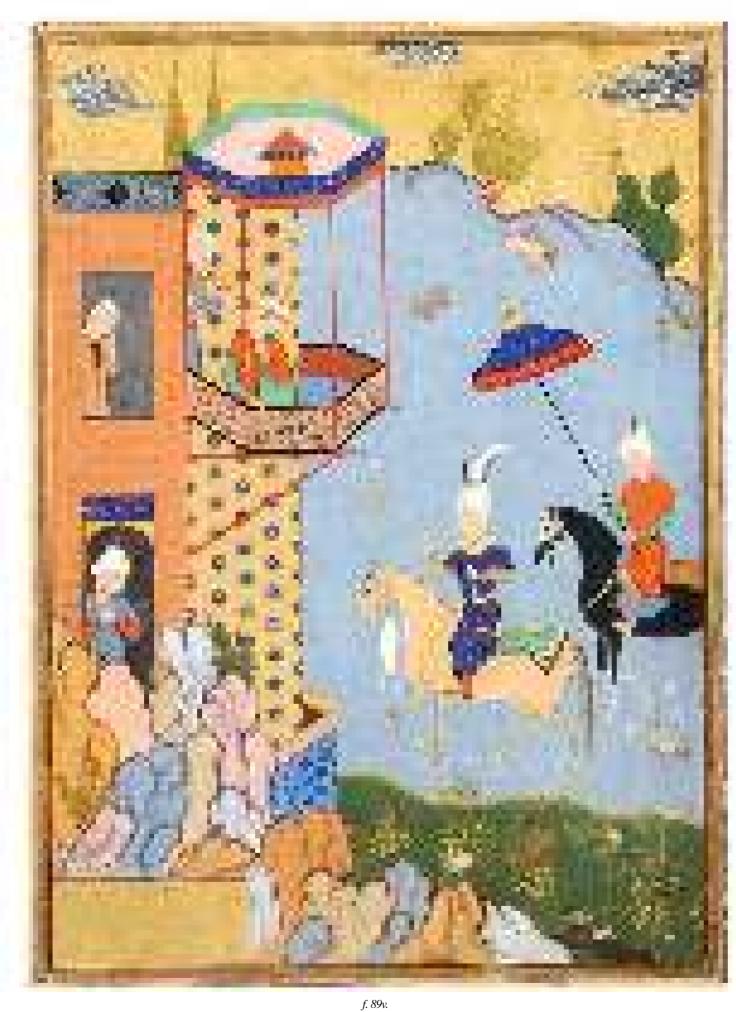
His heroes: Khosrow, Farhad, Leyli, Majnun,

and Iskandar are all firmly based in the Middle East, where, his works have enjoyed such great popularity. Since the Bahr-e Mutaqarib used in the Shahnameh by Ferdowsi was the traditional rhythm of choice for Persian-language heroic epics, Nizami uses some bahr in his poem about Iskandar. After Nizami, however, it was not possible to use this bahr in heroic and romantic poems that praised love. In love poems, where the female protagonist does not play a significant role, it has become customary to use the bahr that Nizami employed in his Leyli and Majnun. As for fantasy love poems, the metre used









Khosrow before Shirin's castle.

PNS 267. Amir Khosrow Dehlavi. The National Library of Russia. Date: ca. 1540–1550–1560. Place: Shiraz.

scription of the most important works alone would probably constitute a few volumes. His *Khamsa* has always been the universally recognized standard.

The Indo-Persian poet Amir Khosrow Dehlavi had a special role in the succession of Nizami's tradition. Among Dehlavi's numerous works, there is a particular place reserved for his *Five Treasures*, i.e., five *masnavis* that coincide completely with Nizami's original plots. Unlike Nizami, Amir Khosrow Dehlavi served Turkic dynasty rulers in India; as a court poet, he would not dare hold forth on social issues. In Nizami's works, of course, this was a central theme. Amir Khosrow did not presume to advise his readers; he merely wanted to entertain them and he never ventured beyond the mindset of the feudal aristocracy of the day.

Late 15th century Timurid rulers displayed great interest in literature; some even tried their own hands at writing it. Poetry lovers of the era were par-

PNS 389. A bd ar-Rahman Jami. The National Library of Russia. Calligrapher: Djamal ad-Din Husayn Shirazi. Date: ca. 1580.





f. 9. The Mi'raj of Prophet Muhammad.





ticularly interested in motifs from the *Khams*a, so poets great and small all tried to produce a new version. Apart from Nizami, they would turn to Amir Khosrow Dehlavi; it is quite typical that most Timurid rulers preferred Amir Khosrow and his *Five Treasures* to Nizami and his *Khamsa*. In our view, however, this stemmed not from artistic considerations; the Timurids realized that Nizami's amazing *masnavis* were politically risky. Another possibility is that the Timurids encouraged their court poets to write a new *Khamsa* in the hope that someone would finally best Nizami.

But these were vain hopes: most of those works have not survived, nor were they popular with the literary community of those times. Still, they did have some impact in bringing about, in their different ways, a major change in literary life. This cultural breakthrough in the Timurid state was propelled by Alisher Navoi, one of the great public officials of the 15th century, a prominent poet and philosopher, and one of the most productive writers of his time. Of all his works his poem *Farhad and Shirin* is of particular interest compared with Nizami's *masnavi Khosrow and Shirin*.

Inspired by the interest in the *Khamsa* genre, pervasive in his time, Navoi decided to try his hand too, and, there is something that sets Navoi significantly apart from other of Nizami's imitators. While all previous writers, regardless of their ethnicity, used the dominant

Persian language for their literature, Navoi abandoned this tradition and wrote his *Khamsa* in his mother tongue, *Turki*, now known as the ancient Uzbek language and a "forefather" of the literary Uzbek language of today.

Comparable with Nizami's version may also be the magnificent *Leyli and Majnun* of Muhammad Fuzuli (1494–1562), another of Azerbaijan's greatest poets.

Developing the concepts established in Nizami's works, the prominent poets of the Orient sought to portray in their works the ideals of moral perfection. One such was Abd ar-Rahman Jami (1414–1492). Important works of oriental poetry also explored, in the Nizami tradition, the ideas of a fair society by developing a portrait of a perfect ruler.

Their loyalty to didactic appeal and attempts to influence the morality and character of their contemporaries would prompt poets like Abd ar-Rahman Jami and Alisher Navoi to deal in the general; trying to express their moral and ethical ideals figuratively, these poets would produce conventional word pictures and classical plots. Giving preference to ethical motifs, Abd ar-Rahman Jami created short stories with the use of allegory to display the positive and negative traits of their characters. It was not his intention to describe a specific person or their personal characteristics, but rather to outline the issue at hand.

Using one literary genre or another, Navoi and Jami held firmly to the traditional concept of human perfection

and fair administration of the state. Navoi also walked in Nizami's footsteps in glorifying the ideal society without a ruler, but he does not match it with a state governed by a just and well-educated ruler. Nor does Navoi personalize his characters, or bring them close to reality; and

unlike Jami, he makes use of fictional elements.

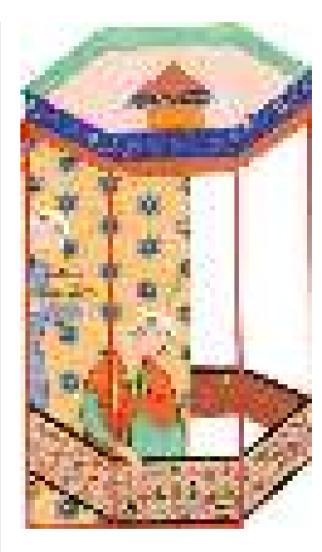
At that time, the concept of spiritual perfection under the influence of *irfan* (gnosis) was much more pronounced, thus the dervish who removed himself from worldly affairs and retired to a desert or a cave to offer his prayers to Allah was regarded as an ideal person. This concept had an influence on the depiction of traditional characters in poetry.

The latest brilliant research into the impact of Nizami's themes and plots on oriental literature was carried out by the famous orientalist Ghazanfar Aliyev. For his book, he assembled many facts to determine the role of Nizami's school of poetry in the development of oriental literature, covering the issue within the context of objective historical, social, literary and cultural events. Not only the themes, plots and characters of Nizami's poetry, but also his ideas and artistic principles, left deep, century-long imprints on oriental literature. Interestingly, even memoirists have maintained that Nizami's school was the standard for centuries. Fakhr al-Zamani Qazvi-

ni, author of the analecta *Tazkirah-I Meykhan*a, provided over 30 examples in his book on the topic of Nizami's *Saqinama* (The book of the Winebringer). Agha Ahmed Ali, an Indian author and member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, began compiling for his analecta *Haft Asiman* a list of poems dedicated to Nizami, but did not complete his work. He published only a portion, which included 78 poems based on *The Treasury of Mysteries*.

Soviet era interest in the issue of Nizami's place in oriental literature was personified by Y. Berthels. The Turkish scientist Agah Sırrı Levent conducted a study of 92 works based on Nizami's *Leyli and Majnun*. Ghazanfar Aliyev, on the other hand, conducted this work in systematic and comprehensive fashion, resulting in a valuable book with information on over 370 works created in the Orient and based on themes and plots from Nizami's *Khamsa*.

Writing about the influence Nizami's works had on oriental literature, the author focused on theoretical categories that ensure the succession of traditional themes and plots. Disregarding the categories of theoretical sources in oriental poetics, some European and Russian orientalists have maintained at some point that the same characters and motifs have been repeated in oriental poetry with practically no space left for an author's personal creativity. Shedding light on this issue, Academician A. B. Kudelin outlined a major fault in the views









Dorn 559. Alisher Navoi. The National Library of Russia. Date: 1521–1522.

Painter Mani (prophet) presenting King Bahram Gur with his drawing. Samarkand or Shakrukhia (Tashkent) miniature painting.



of renowned scholars like Carl Brockelmann, Francesco Gabrieli, Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb, Régis Blachère and Gustave Edmond von Grunebaum. The creative principles of medieval authors were explained and analysed in line with the poetic standards applicable to European literature of the 19th–20th centuries, which resulted in a distortion of the medieval poetic concept and a misinterpretation of its aesthetic value. In fact, the aesthetics of oriental poetry were concerned with the creation of new works of art based on traditional content, motif and plot, thus perfecting their taste and revealing entirely new shades of meaning. Great masters of the art would never resort to imitation.

G. Aliyev emphasizes three categories among those systematizing literary traditions in oriental literary criticism and poetics and ensuring their continuity: *tatabbo*, *nazira* and *jawaba*. Literary scholars sometimes attribute a work of art to all three of them, although they display certain differences.

Tatabbo concerns small *ghazals* and *gasidas*; the word *tatabbo* means "to follow or shadow someone". If a poet writes his poem using a predecessor's work as an example, it is called *tatabbo*. This tradition also applies to the epic genre. In this case, a poet may revise the plot

even while keeping to the form of the work chosen as an example. For example, the Persian-language Indian poet Fani Kashmiri had Nizami's *Haft Paykar* (*The Seven Beauties*) as an example for his *Haft Akhtar* (*The Seven Stars*).

The most widespread tradition in oriental literature is *nazira* (imitative poem). Taking up the subject and plot of another writer's work, an author unleashes his own poetic imagination and introduces certain changes to the storyline. This tradition of independent creativity goes way beyond mere imitation. Back in the 16th–18th centuries, many renowned poets of the Orient would take the theme and plot of Nizami's works to write imitative poems. Writing any kind of imitative poem, a poet was in a way competing with his predecessor, sometimes even attempting to best them in terms of art and poetry. One such example is Amir Khosrow. In his *Naqshi-hayal*, based on the *masnavi*, *The Treasury of Mysteries*, the Turkish poet Azari calls Nizami "the head of this caravan".

Unlike *naziras*, works written as a response employ a brand-new plot. For example, the *Nal and Daman* of the Indian poet Faizi is a response to Nizami's *Khosrow* and Shirin, while enjoying a different plot. It is of some







note that even more *masnavis* were written in response to *The Treasury of Mysteries*; this is ascribed to the fact that Nizami's first *masnavi* does not have a single plot line. Regardless of example or type, the Nizami literary school was under the spotlight of oriental literature for many centuries, and exerted a great influence there.

The Iranian scientist Dr. Abdolhossein Zarrinkoub, who has profound knowledge of the poetic heritage of the Muslim Orient and is also familiar with European literature, has conducted typological comparative analyses of the Eastern and Western theoretical aesthetic systems; he gives Nizami a great deal of credit for his merits in the development and evolution of medieval oriental poetry. He believed that a general recognition of Nizami's importance is justified by the simple fact that every talented poet who wanted to write an epic had to prove their worth by creating a Khamsa-like work or at least a nazira (imitative poem) or jawaba (response) to some of the poems included there. Among those poets who competed with Nizami were Khwaju Kermani, Amir Khosrow Dehlavi, Katibi Turshizi, Abd ar-Rahman Jami, Maktabi Shirazi, Shaikh Abu al-Faiz ibn Mubarak etc. After Nizami, however, the art of epic writing declined somewhat – not through any fault or shortcoming on his part, but because

of the greatness of his artistic talent and merit.

Jamila Hasanzade Nasib Goyushov 12,

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